JOHN GALSWORTHY.
ELINOR GLYN.

The March

ROYAL

1/- NET.

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Grannie says,

"There is nae question
Beecham's Pills improve digestion".
She keeps a healthy appetite
By takin' Beecham's Pills each night.

BEECHAM'S
PILLS.

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Miss Trimble Tries Sabotage.

By Christine Castle.

Illustrated by Treyer Evans.

DIRECTLY after the twelve o'clock whistle blew Miss Trimble edged timidly into the junior partner's private office—a humble vassal come to kiss the king's shoes for a boon. She burst out five minutes later, a militant anarchist. Her head was canted sharply to emphasise the chip on one angular shoulder; her thin upper lip curled; her long nose puckered; her tear-reddened eyes darted glints of vindictiveness like serpents' tongues.

The telephone operator, the filing clerk's bosom chum, sat near a window, waiting for her friend's report of the interview with Judkins.

On Miss Bailey's lap a ham sandwich, a dill pickle, and a square hunk of cake sagged in the middle of a crumpled green *Sporting Supplement*, like a mixed salad garnished with lettuce.

Miss Bailey beckoned with a hard-boiled egg, and Miss Trimble veered from the cloak-room, whither she had been bound. Her friend handed her a cardboard box and a question: "Here's your lunch, Elinor. What'd 'e say?"

The switchboard girl's look of indignant sympathy was salve to the filing clerk's smarting pride. Miss Trimble took the box and plumped into the chair drawn close to her chum. Glancing warily about to make sure that none of the half-dozen other girls in the big room were near enough to hear her confidence, she began:

"He said it didn't take any brains to file letters—anybody could do it; and, if I wasn't satisfied, there was plenty of girls that'd be glad to get thirty shillings a week. I asked him how he expected a person was going to pay board and buy clothes on such wages, and he said he always s'posed I lived at home with my people. I told 'im I didn't, and then he——" Miss Trimble's breath caught in a snivel. "Then he in-insulted me!"

"Oh, how?" gasped Miss Bailey.

The filing clerk soaked up two hot tears and choked out of her quivering lips:

"He—he asked me if—if I was *respectable!*"

"Oh-h-h-h!" The switchboard operator exhaled her horror a second time.

She commiseratingly proffered her pickle. Grateful Miss Trimble took a convulsive bite.

A short, stout, surly-looking man in a black bowler hat and spring overcoat jolted from the junior partner's room and clumped flat-footedly down the passage. The two girls glared after Judkins; but he ignored their presence with his customary disdain for subordinate employees. He stood a moment at the door while he buttoned his gloves, then went pompously out to lunch.

The instant it was safe to speak again Miss Bailey returned with avid appetite to the interrupted banquet of babble.

"What'd you say to 'im?"

The consciousness of impeccability frosted the filing clerk's reply.

"I wouldn't *lower* myself to answer such a question. I just *look'd* at him."

Miss Trimble reproduced for the edification of her confidante an expression of icy disdain. Her manner inferred, though she refrained from making the direct claim, that she had frozen Judkins in the midst of his innuendo.

"Serves 'im right!" The telephone girl instantly pronounced her verdict. "The very idea! What'd 'e do then?"

"He mumbled that he'd talk to Murray about it and that he'd see. I know what that means. He won't ever mention it again—'ll pretend he's forgot all about it. He thinks I ain't got the nerve to tackle him a second time if he don't say something to me first."

"But you'll fool him?" guessed Miss Bailey.

She was tremulous with admiration of her

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chum's bravado, and poised her sandwich, oblivious of its succulence.

"You watch me!" Miss Trimble savagely chewed a mouthful of bread. "If they don't come across. I'll make 'em wish they had."

A short, stout, surly-looking man . . . jolted from the junior partner's room and clumped flat-footedly down the passage. The two girls glared after Judkins.—

"How?" the telephone operator begged breathlessly.

"I do' know yet; but I'll think of a way," the filing clerk promised.

Miss Trimble was not quite frank with her friend. An idea had already occurred to her; but she wanted to perfect it before she made the disclosure. All that afternoon, while she sorted letters, she elaborated her plans. Then, when she felt satisfied that it would succeed, she decided to keep the scheme to herself. Marie was her bosom friend, of course; but, on the whole, it seemed best not to expose her garrulous chum to temptation.

So to the telephone operator's eager questions the filing clerk for three days evaded informative replies. Miss Trimble manifested no signs of altered habits, except that she worked at her correspondence task with zest instead of like a bored automaton.

By Friday afternoon all the accumulated letters had been filed; for the first time in months the sorting table was bare.

A little after half-past four Miss Trimble doffed her black working apron and walked over to the switchboard.

"Marie, I'm going to quit," she informed her friend bluntly.

The filing clerk vouchsafed to her astounded chum no opportunity for comment or protest, but started briskly towards the sanctum.

She opened the door without the formality of knocking, as a neighbour would go into a stricken house to break bad news.

"Mr. Judkins," she introduced her errand compassionately, "I had a talk with you the other day and asked you to raise me to thirty-five shillings a week. You didn't think the position was worth that much; so I think I'd better leave. All the letters are filed right

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— He stood a moment at the door while he buttoned his gloves, then went pompously out to lunch. [Page 385, col. 2.]

up-to-date, and the new girl you get won't find any of the work behind."

Diplomatic Miss Trimble came a little closer to the desk and proffered her palm in the friendliest fashion.

"I'm really sorry to leave you so sudden, Mr. Judkins; but you can't blame me for wanting to better myself. Good-bye."

Before he realised what he was doing, the junior partner had grasped the girl's slim hand and was mumbling a conventional expression of goodwill.

"I regret to lose you, Miss Trimble. Your work here has been entirely satisfactory, and I am glad you have found a better place."

Suddenly Judkins realised that he was acting like a human being. He snapped back into the *rôle* of a very busy employer of hirelings. As he creaked his swivel chair round to his desk again he grunted:

"Tell Harkridge to give you your money."

"Thank you," said the meek Miss Trimble.

Very quietly she made her exit. Judkins hated noisy people. The door scarcely clicked when she latched it.

She walked to the cashier's desk.

"I've quit," she announced to Harkridge. "The boss said you're to gi' me my thirty hard-earned shillings now."

Miss Trimble realised that she was not a match for so shrewd a cross-examiner as Miss Bailey; therefore she avoided the switchboard and hurried to the cloak-room. She was afraid her chum might summon the relief operator and intercept her there. She ripped the lining of her old jacket in her haste to don it, and one of the two crooked stilettos she recklessly jabbed through her shabby hat grazed her scalp.

Three minutes after she got her money she was skipping down the passage. She paused at the switchboard only long enough to peck the briefest of farewells to her friend.

"Judkins is awfully mad at me for quitting!" she warned in a sibilant whisper "I'll come round next week, after it's blew over, and tell you all about it. Don't worry about me. Good-bye!"

Miss Trimble whisked away from her dumbfounded friend. She had the gratification of noting that Miss Bailey looked scared. In order to heighten the histrionic effect of her exit, the self-banished girl tip-toed to the front door, and opened it with infinite caution, as if she were an escaping prisoner. She twisted about for a last artificially fearful glance towards the sanctum, and furtively waved her hand to her friend, who peered at her from behind the switchboard. Then, for the benefit of the other clerks and stenographers in the big office, Miss Trimble conferred on Miss Bailey the distinction of mystery by significantly pressing the tips of her fingers against her lips. In tense silence she shut the door.

Miss Trimble made no search for another position. She abandoned care and chummed with pleasure for six luxurious days. In all that time the wolf did not once howl at her garret bedroom door; for nearly a year and a half she had saved religiously ninepence a week out of her wages. Every morning she lay abed late and read romances drawn from the public library. Her delightful new *régime* had an added advantage: it eliminated one meal daily. Miss Trimble had felt no

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compunction about paying one-and-sixpence for the combination of breakfast and lunch to which she treated herself each mid-day at Tony's Bon-Ton Restaurant.

In the afternoons she went to the parks, or shopped inexpensively by dint of affecting a finical taste for shades and patterns that the big shops in Regent Street did not have. Three of her evenings she was so lucky as to spend with "fellows." One escorted her to a dance; with another she thrilled at a "refined" moving picture show; the third took her to a real theatre, but subjected her to the humiliation of sitting in the eighth row of the gallery. The remaining nights she steeped her romantic spirit in the novels she drew from the library.

Just before noon on Friday Miss Trimble dropped the book she had been reading in bed, and cuddled the pillow while she lazily computed the cost of the past six days of prodigal dissipation. She pulled her handbag from its hiding-place between the mattress and the springs. A count of her depleted fortunes, and a subtraction of the sum from the amount of her original capital, gave the gratifying result that she had spent since leaving Murray and Judkins only one pound-twelve-and-fourpence-halfpenny.

She sat up in bed smiling, and began to plan the day before her. To her vague surprise her brain did not function with its usual zest for programme-making. All at once the joy of idle freedom palled. Miss Trimble realised that she had sated her appetite for pleasure. She wanted, she actually *craved*, work. Until then not a moment of uneasiness had flawed her perfect week. She had looked forward serenely to the resumption of her abandoned tasks when she should have tired of playing truant. As *ennui* dulled the bright colours of leisure, the first qualms of doubt about the future began to sicken and alarm her.

Miss Trimble stared wild-eyed into the mirror of the dressing-table beside her bed. She saw a scared, pale face. Her reflected image mutely asked an anxious question. Suppose Murray and Judkins had engaged a remarkably bright girl as her successor and the secret basis of her plan had been discovered?

The quaking young woman tossed back the patched quilt, leapt to the uncarpeted floor, and began scrambling into her working clothes. She did not dawdle over her coiffure, but tangled her brown hair into braids and knotted it on her tousled head. It seemed to Miss Trimble that the passing minutes, like the waves of a relentless tide, were sweeping her farther and farther from the secure haven she had abandoned. Gladly would she have returned at that moment to her old moorings. Thirty shillings a week would have anchored her securely in Murray and Judkins' office for life.

Not until she was dressed did Miss Trimble realise that she had not washed. She ran to the sink which served her in lieu of a bathroom, turned the tap, and dabbed her face with cold water. The touch of it had a magical effect. It was as if she had been half-asleep and now was shocked out of drowsiness into complete sensibility.

In an instant her fears were washed away like a nightmare from which she had awakened. The girl vigorously scrubbed her cheeks with a sponge, then dried them red with a rough towel. She dropped the towel and blinked. The dreadful vision had vanished.

Through all her young body tingled the reaction to self-confidence. Miss Trimble smiled now at the bad dream that had frightened her. How foolish it was to feel afraid that she would not regain her job and win the rise for which she had planned so perfectly! She snickered over a fanciful picture of swearing Judkins begging her to come back to work on her own terms.

Having thus reassured herself, Miss Trimble forthwith discarded the livery of self-abasement. Her shabby working clothes of rusty black were flung aside; she decked herself in Sunday finery.

In donning her best clothes for the excursion she contemplated, Miss Trimble followed immemorial precedent. No self-respecting ex-employee ever re-enters the doors of a former boss unless garbed in the raiment of abundant and cocky prosperity.

At the end of an hour of fastidious devotion to her toilette, Miss Trimble felt that she was suitably dressed for a nonchalant call at the office of Murray and Judkins, with the ostensible object of seeing her chum.

A little after one o'clock a fashionable young woman tripped down the unscrubbed front steps of Mrs. Mason's polyglot boarding-house. She halted at the Bon-Ton Restaurant near the corner for a cup of coffee and a brace of doughnuts. Then, fortified against faintness of either spirit or body, she took a bus to the City. At five minutes before two Miss Trimble debonairly opened Murray and Judkins' front door.

Her first glance swept her old domain, and she smiled at what she saw. Letters, orders, duplicate invoices, and bills of lading overflowed from the wire desk-baskets and were strewn on the tops of the sectional

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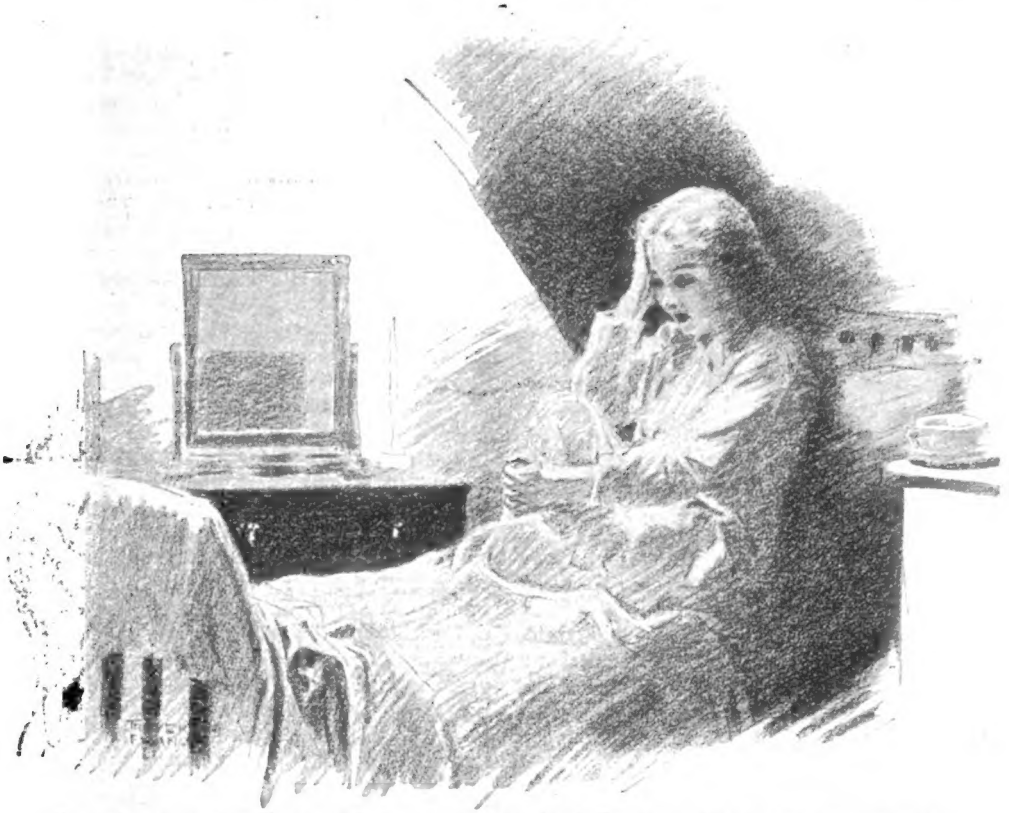

She sat up in bed smiling, and began to plan the day before her. To her vague surprise her brain did not function with its usual zest for programme-making.

cabinets. Chairs and tables were piled high with unsorted correspondence. Rickety pillars made of stacked filing envelopes leant drunkenly against the wall. In the midst of the confusion, like a cork bobbing in a vat of froth, a strange girl jumped about as if she had lost her wits and was trying frantically to find them.

Miss Trimble tripped blithely to the wicket in the brass railing that separated the clerks' desks from the public section of the general office. She was proudly conscious of the thirty pairs of eyes focused on her. Her walk resembled the hopping of a saucy sparrow.

"Hullo, M'rie!" she chirped to her friend at the switchboard.

She waved her mauve-gloved hand, as if by after-thought, in an exclusive gesture of recognition to her less intimate acquaintances in the big room.

"Is Mr. Judkins in?" she inquired in her best tone of languid elegance.

Loyal Miss Bailey bent forward swiftly and whispered the warning of a true friend: "Skip! He'll half-murder you if he sets eyes on you!"

Miss Trimble showed no evidence of trepidation. She arched her brows very high in an elaborate pretence of innocent wonder.

"Why, what's the matter?" she inquired.

"Judkins swears you mixed up the files. This office has been a regular *h-e*-double *l* for a week!" hissed the telephone girl.

Miss Trimble giggled gleefully. Then she suddenly remembered the *rôle* she must play. In her eyes blazed an almost perfect imitation of wrath. With unladylike heat she shrivelled the charge laid at her door.

"He's a liar! When I left there wasn't a single letter in that cabinet I couldn't 'ave put my 'and on in half-a-minute."

She stared past Miss Bailey and scornfully appraised her successor. Then very haughtily, a grand-duchess traversing a village street lined with serfs, Miss Trimble sauntered up the passage. As she went she bestowed on the clerks and stenographers whom she passed the largess of her gracious quips and smiles. The door of the junior partner's room stood open. She glided in.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Judkins," Miss Trimble sweetly announced herself to the

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broad back and bald head of her former employer. "I left my apron in the cloak-room last Friday. Can I get it, please?"

Judkins whirled in his swivel-chair and bounced to his feet, brandishing his pudgy fist.

"What have you done with our files?" he roared. "We can't find anything we want."

Miss Trimble coolly stepped back and shut the door. She had no intention of letting the whole office staff overhear the stormy interview just begun. Later, when she should have brought the junior partner to his knees, she would make her own adroitly-expurgated report to Marie. Now, calmly unafraid, she confronted the irate business man.

"I noticed when I came in that the new girl is a little behind with her work," Miss Trimble sympathised. Then she bristled. "But you 'aven't got any right to blame me for that. I left everything all cleared up," she reminded him. She followed her defence with a tactful rebuke calculated to disprove any ill-will towards her successor: "You ought to give a beginner a little time to learn. She looks willing, even if she don't seem very bright. You can't expect her to catch on in a minute."

Miss Trimble's bearing was perfectly placid. Her serenity made Judkins froth at the mouth.

"The girl's a fool!" he snarled. "But her thick-headedness isn't the main trouble. You had all the files mixed up before you left!"

"Why, Mr. Judkins!"

Miss Trimble gaped at him as if she could hardly believe that she had heard rightly. All at once she seemed to comprehend that an aspersion had been cast upon her. She flung it back.

"How can you say such a thing? You know it isn't so. When I left, you said yourself that my work had always been perfectly satisfactory. Nobody ever complained about me all the two years I was here."

This was an exaggeration of the truth, to say the least, but Miss Trimble realised that the present was a time for bold denials of faults and for sweeping claims of merit.

"I don't want to hurt anybody, but I saw, the minute I came in, that your new girl can never learn to keep track of all those cabinets. She looks like a foreigner; she's dumb, and easily muddled besides. A person's got to keep her head about her to handle those files right."

Judkins choked, as if his sudden doubts of Miss Trimble's guilt were hard to swallow. He glared suspiciously at the girl confronting him. She met his eyes without flinching; she even smiled. Then Miss Trimble soothed his ire with an emolient that was part of her pre-determined strategy.

"Tell me what the trouble is, Mr. Judkins, and if I can help you out I will," she offered generously. "I got off at one o'clock to-day, and I was going to a matinée; but I'll be glad to stay and show that new girl, if you want me to."

Surely so magnanimous a proposal must prove her entire innocence of connivance at the state of chaos that existed in the filing department! Miss Trimble looked confidently to Judkins for an apology.

The junior partner was a drowning man. His ex-employee was the only life-saver in sight. Judkins' eyes remained implacably malignant, and Miss Trimble knew he still suspected that she had pushed him overboard into the sea of troubles in which he was floundering; but he strangled out his desperate appeal for rescue.

"Find these for me!" The junior partner grabbed a list from his desk and thrust it on the girl. "I've got to have those letters to-night. Murray is in Manchester on that lawsuit, and none of the correspondence is in the Higgins file."

Miss Trimble glanced over the memorandum. Then she started for the door.

"Of course not. Wait a minute," she directed.

While Judkins, in breathless suspense, watched her from the threshold of his sanctum, she walked straight to a certain filing-cabinet. The new girl looked up wonderingly at her approach, but Miss Trimble did not deign to give the usurper any explanation of her presence or actions. She pulled out a drawer; her deft fingers fluttered over six or seven big filing-folders and came to the one she sought. She pulled it open and quickly selected eight letters from its contents. *Slam!* The section was closed. Miss Trimble returned to Judkins.

"There you are!" she triumphed.

She handed him the papers she had brought, and walked beside him back into his office while he glanced swiftly over them. A second time she prudently shut the door.

The junior partner jerked his eyes away from the last letter and peered at the girl's smiling face.

"Where were they?" he demanded. "I looked in the Higgins file myself, where they ought to have been."

Miss Trimble was ready with her explanation:

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"I kept such important letters separate from ordinary correspondence. I knew those were evidence in a lawsuit, and I filed them under 'Litigation Pending,' so there wouldn't be any da ger they'd get lost. I was always extra careful about letting anybody in the office have things out of that folder."

Judkins gasped; then he sputtered weakly: "Who told you to do that?"

"Nobody ever had to tell me about my work," Miss Trimble made proud retort.

The light of comprehension began to dawn in the junior partner's short-sighted eyes. He shrewdly put a sharp leading question.

"And have you got all the important correspondence filed where nobody can find it but you?"

"A stranger might have a little trouble," Miss Trimble admitted, as if the possibility had not occurred to her before.

Judkins scowled blankly; then a wry grin twisted his mouth.

"I think you told me last week that brains were not appreciated in this office," he remarked dryly. "You were right—then. But I've been thinking the matter over since, and I'd like you to come back and work on the files until we can find something—ahem!—more worthy of your talents."

"At two pounds?" Miss Trimble queried reflectively.

"You said thirty-five!" he snapped a correction.

"But it wouldn't be fair to leave my new place for the same money." She raised a moral issue.

"Your new place!" he snorted.

She turned her back on his imputation and started haughtily towards the door.

"Two pounds, then!" His unconditional surrender sounded like a burst of profanity.

The young woman faced about resignedly.

"All right!" she sighed, with an air of martyrdom. "It will be an awful job to clean up the mess that fool's made. I think I'd better start straightaway."

Very quietly she made her exit. Judkins hated noisy people. The door scarcely clicked when she latched it.

It takes a head to be a filing-clerk.

TRIUMPH.

I travel up each morn with Jones,
  And all the journey through
He talks in patronising tones
  Of all he means to do.
He tells me for his wealth is far
  Superior to mine)
The ailments of his motor-car,
  And what he pays for wine.

But most he talks to me, while I
  Grow enviously hot,
About his plans to beautify
  His lordly garden plot.
For I, too, love a garden fair,
  And sadly deem it hard
That he should talk of acres where
  I measure by the yard.

But now I've triumphed over him;
  I do not envy (much)
His ample lawn, his borders trim,
  His pergola and such.
I never tire of mentioning,
  And great his anger is,
My crocus bloomed to greet the Spring
  Ten days ahead of his.

Theta.

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How I Would Educate a Husband.

By Elinor Glyn.

Illustrated by Gladys Peto.

This is one of the few logical, sincere articles on the relations of the married which has ever been written. There are certain women and a few men whom it will infuriate, but the majority will be grateful to Mrs. Glyn for a calm and reasoned statement of facts.—Ed. R.M.

THIS is a very difficult subject to write about in a single article, because "How I Would Educate a Wife" is so part of it that it is hard to separate the two themes, because the conduct of the one is always the cause of the action in the other. So it may be best to discuss some general fundamental points about man and woman which must afterwards be kept in mind when either is dealing with a criticism upon the actions of the other.

"First catch your fish and anyone can tell you how to cook it" you may be tempted to say, you who read; "in these after-war days men are so scarce"!

And just because of this, because they are in the minority, it seems to me to be all the more important that the women who are reading this should know something about their subconscious instincts before I can dare to air my views as to how a husband should be "educated." In many cases where the marriage does not go very well it is because the woman is so ignorant of the male nature that, far from "educating," she bores to death. And now this will perhaps horrify many of you.

It is not natural for any man to be faithful. Fidelity is the result of the influence of religion, the law-abiding instinct, and the force of public opinion. But it is not natural. For, to enable the Supreme Being's scheme of things to work, man must be a polygamous animal, because if the instinct to re-create his species were not stronger than any other instinct the human race would have died out long ago. It does not upset the scheme for a man to possess several wives—rather it produces more offspring, and so the Nature plan is aided.

Now woman is not naturally polyandrous, because, if she were, it would end in upsetting the scheme, for she would have few, if any, offspring.

Thus man has to fight a natural instinct when he is faithful to one woman, and woman has merely to resist an acquired desire in order to remain faithful to one man.

Man's part in the affair is much the harder, because his polygamous instinct is Nature's prompting, and acts therefore subconsciously and continuously, and woman's instinct for polyandry is only intermittent and the result of circumstance, not a continuous Nature suggestion.

Very few women would be willing to face these facts, because it is the habit of the female mind to discuss results, not causes. But if any one of them will use intelligence and go back to fundamental truths, she is

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It is not natural for any man to be faithful; it remains with his wife to use sufficient charm to keep him from seeking relaxation elsewhere.

bound to realise that what I am stating is true.

It is civilisation and the Christian religion which has taught the human races to place this supreme value upon monogamy. Nature does not suggest it at all. And even in woman the instinct for fidelity would not continue subconsciously in spite of neglect or coolness, because the principle of Nature's scheme—*i.e.*, the necessity for species' continuance—would then be invalidated, and Nature would subconsciously direct the woman to take another mate.

Thus it must be seen that fidelity in either man or woman depends upon the mate's power of calling it forth and not upon the individual at all. It is an ideal state, a product of the soul aspirations, but not natural in any way. Thus, for both to be faithful, the woman should satisfy the man's polygamous instincts by never letting him feel satiated, by having protean charms in herself, and the man should lavish upon her love and attention, so that her subconscious instinct may not prompt her to seek them elsewhere. But even admitting all this, it is still harder for a man to remain faithful than for a woman, because his polygamous instinct is always active and woman's polyandrous instinct is only periodically so.

If the statistics could be obtained, I feel sure they would testify to a larger number of unfaithful men than unfaithful women, but to blame them would be false justice. It would be more logical to blame their wives for not having used sufficient charm to keep them desiring to be faithful. No man is unfaithful if the woman satisfies him in every way—in the aspirations of the soul, the sympathy of mind, and the joy of the body.

But if the woman fails in one of this trinity, then the man automatically and unconsciously becomes unfaithful to her in whichever respect she has proved inadequate. That is to say, if she disappoints his soul it then subconsciously begins searching for a new soul-mate. If she wearies his mind, his mind is free to be attracted by another mind which will not weary it. And if she is cold and unresponsive in body that is the most disillusioning of all, and will provoke infidelity immediately, either in the spirit or the letter, because she will then be upsetting the Nature principle.

Thus it lies in the woman's hands to keep a man faithful, and vice versa.

Fidelity, like morality, is only interpreted in general in its physical sense, although if you look it up in a dictionary you will find this aspect not alluded to at all. Fidelity is explained as "honesty, veracity, faithful

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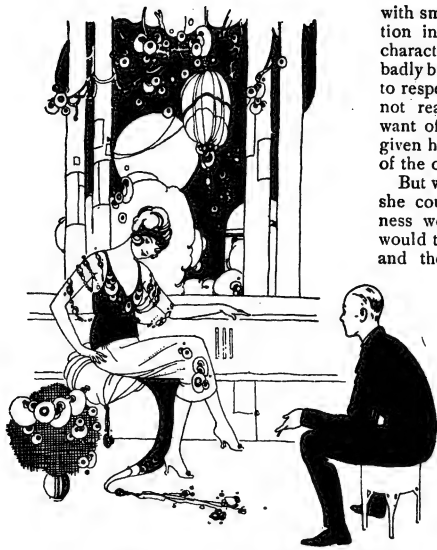

A woman should make a man understand from the beginning that she is not a doormat.

adherence," and morality, as "the doctrine of the duties of life."

To the really exalted spirit infidelity of the body is the least in importance in the trinity; to the unthinking every-day man and woman it is the only part which really matters to them. Now all these fundamental instincts in man and woman must be grasped before we can have any sensible discussion upon how to educate a husband.

It must be clearly borne in mind that both husband and wife are ruled by certain sub-conscious instincts over which they have no control, because these instincts have been planted in them by a wise God who presumably knows best, so that His nature scheme may work; and that they therefore can only control the demonstration of these instincts, but are powerless to alter the instincts themselves.

The first advice I should give to a bride is to try to keep the man from remembering that he is a husband at all. Let him feel all the time that he is still a fond lover. While she can keep him at this stage his "education" will be an easy matter, provided that she fulfils her side of the bargain also and satisfies him in body, mind, and soul.

The next advice would be never to put up with small selfishnesses or want of consideration in a husband. The man may have a character which is selfish; he may have been badly brought up in his own home—not taught to respect and consider women. Thus, while not really intending to show the slightest want of respect to his wife, habit may have given him that manner, the lack of knowledge of the outside observance of respect.

But while he loves the woman passionately she could easily explain that such uncouthness wounds and disillusions her, and he would then certainly try to check it in himself and the education would finally produce results. Politeness as a habit would have become fixed, even when passion waned. What an unpleasant sight to see the great want of courtesy some men show their wives, especially in England, where the inequality in numbers renders men naturally selfish.

Their little rudenesses, belittling chaff, insulting little inferences, would never have continued if the wife had protested the first time they occurred.

Of course, I am always arguing from the standpoint of the woman fulfilling her side. Naturally, if she does give her husband cause not to respect her she cannot expect him to treat her with respect, although a true gentleman would do so in public however he felt; but there is only a percentage of true gentlemen, and I am writing for men and women, not exceptional specimens.

One can only judge by a man's manner to his wife whether he holds her in his love and whether there is reverence and devotion there; and if he, feeling these things, yet by some stupid, teasing instinct likes to give a false impression by his uncouthness, it is very hard upon the wife. It is this that she should check at once, as she would instantaneously check it while he was only her lover.

I knew a man who had married a woman older than himself; he was devoted to her, but he called her "my old Dutch" (it was when that song came out). I used to watch the poor thing wincing each time. He was quite unaware that he was hurting her, and she never told him, but if she had done so he would have been horrified at his thoughtlessness. It is in all these ways that a woman should begin a husband's education. He will only think all the more of her if she does it without nagging, and only when justice demands it.

A woman should make a man understand

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from the beginning that she is not a doormat, and will only consent to be ruled if her husband convinces her intelligence that his ruling is right. If she in every way fulfils her side, and is attractive and sweet and loving and interesting to him, and thinks of his house and his career, she expects him to fulfil his part also, and not expect her devotion as a matter of course and without showing response.

In the first year, if the woman is a balanced creature and not vain and capricious, she should have indicated to her husband exactly what she thinks is her due, and if it is just the man will be convinced and will give it to her. It is because in the beginning women have not expressed their dislike of ugly habits and small selfishnesses that so many marriages are unhappy and loveless after a while.

A woman should also educate her husband by trying her very best always to keep him up to the highest in himself, by showing him that she appreciates this greatness in him, and will be sad if he does not endeavour to come up to her ideal.

Just for the education of husbands in the abstract, I should say to them that women appreciate kind words of love and sympathy more really than any deeds. The inference that a man has thought about their welfare, has appreciated them, gratifies and soothes them more than any silent action for their benefit. A husband would find peace and pleasure in his house if he always used firmness and good manners and pleasant words.

I said "firmness," because a namby-pamby man who is not master of his own house is never either loved or bothered about; a man who is too complacent is not respected; and a man who is selfish is in the end disliked.

A husband should never stand tempers and scenes and unreasonableness; he ought to refuse to put up with them, just as the wife should refuse to put up with his unpleasant habits. Each should insist upon absolute courtesy from the other. Why should a man imagine that a woman will continue to be in love with him, and fulfil his every desire, if he is making himself utterly unattractive all the time?

A husband should study the character of his wife—her idiosyncrasies, her likes and dislikes, what causes her pleasure and what causes her pain—then he will know how to handle her, and will not only think of expressing his own personality. Both should avoid wounding the other's vanity, since vanity is the unconscious motive-principle which controls the emotions of love and hate.

A husband should know every one of his wife's weaknesses and let her know that he knows them, then the action of female vanity will force her to eliminate them herself—if she loves him. But just the opposite procedure must be followed by a wife, because the action of male vanity is quite different. She should know all her husband's weaknesses, but never let him have a suspicion that she knows them. After analysing them all, she should deliberately shut her eyes to those her commonsense tells her that she cannot make him overcome, and then only let his intelligence and his subconscious mind comprehend by inference that he has the others; and the result of this will be that, for fear she should find them out, his vanity will work to eliminate them. But once the wife deliberately wounds her husband's vanity by letting him see she knows his weaknesses then the game is up, and her influence is nil.

A husband should be generous and thoughtful in giving his wife everything he can afford, and he should show great interest in her clothes, especially those which she wears when she is alone with him. He should make her always feel that her greatest pleasure is secured by pleasing his eye and his ear and his mind. He should let her understand that he appreciates all the daintiest refinements, and so encourage her to be always delectable to him.

In the beginning he ought to express just as plainly as she did what he does not like in her, and then he ought to praise her and make her feel

A wife must remember that it lies in her own power to charm and hold her husband. [Page 396, col. 2]

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pleased with herself whenever he legitimately can.

Morose, selfishly silent men are never adored, and grudging of kind words withers love, even when it started warmly.

If only men could realise this, scores of marriages could be successes which are now failures.

Some seem actually determined never to say a nice or complimentary thing to their wives, while quite lavish with sweet things to other women.

Many men seem to imagine that no effort is needed on their parts to be good husbands; that they can take a young girl filled with ideals and tenderness and crush them all out, and bring the tie of marriage down to a sordid, humdrum level, and yet expect her to come up to every standard which makes for their own comfort and pleasure. They have obtained what they desired, which in many cases is only a gratification of their sex instinct, and the poor woman is left utterly unsatisfied in her mind and soul, the craving for such satisfaction having been the main reason which caused her to enter the bonds of matrimony.

The education of a husband should be undertaken by himself even more strongly than by his wife. He should ask himself daily if he is coming up to the scratch, as he would unconsciously ask himself if he were an honest business man. He should ask himself, if he is really using his intelligence to make the affair work smoothly, if he is really understanding his wife's mind and wants, and is really guiding and directing her to the highest, or if he is just drifting along without any thought of her, and only intent upon expressing his own personality. There are hundreds—thousands of Englishmen who, if they only stopped to think and controlled their vanity sufficiently to enable them to see clearly, would be horrified at their own absolute selfishness and want of consideration to the girls they have persuaded into matrimony.

In this union of marriage whichever character is the stronger really rules, regardless of sex. But the admitted position of authority of the English husband gives even the weaklings an advantage, and allows them to express selfishness in the home.

I am not for one moment advocating subservience in a husband; my view is that he should always be master, if his character can be respected sufficiently to permit his wife to be ruled willingly by him. But I do advocate justice – justice which automatically takes into consideration the case of the other side.

Women love to be ruled; the only thing is that they have grown too intelligent not to resent the attempt to rule just because the man is a male creature, regardless of his mentality, ability, or qualities.

A man who is a passionate and tender lover, at once masterful and yet understanding, who does not obstinately begrudge words of sweetness, yet whose character can be respected, will always be adored by his wife and any woman he desires.

To reiterate the three important points which I wish to enforce:

A wife must remember that it lies in her own power to charm and hold; as to whether her husband can remain faithful in the spirit to her, even though fear, or principle, or convention would keep him faithful in the body.

A husband must remember that his wife will not continue loving and obeying him unless he also continues to call forth her desire to do so by giving her love and consideration in return.

And both must remember that it is vanity, and the way in which this subtle and insidious jade is soothed or hurt in either by the other, which is the real deciding force for happiness, or the reverse, in matrimony.

("How I Would Educate a Wife" is the problem which Elinor Glyn deals with in the next article.)

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An exciting episode in the career of Claud Heathwaite, C.B.

The Brown Trunk.

By William Le Queux.

Illustrated by A. Gilbert.

I WAS strolling up the Burlington Arcade one autumn afternoon with my friend, known at Whitehall as "Bee-bee," otherwise Colonel William Benson, D.S.O., when we passed the man of whom we had both been in search for several days.

"Here he is!" whispered my friend, and approaching us I saw a big, stalwart, fair-bearded man, extremely well-dressed, wearing a chestnut-coloured suit, white spats and brown shoes, accompanied by a rather stout, elegantly-dressed woman of about thirty-five.

They were foreigners, and were leisurely inspecting the shop windows of the famous Arcade.

I noted the pair very carefully, halting to light a cigarette in order to obtain a longer view of them.

The man I judged to be about forty. His fair eyebrows were bushy, and his light-coloured eyes were rather expressionless. His clothes were in imitation of the English cut, but I saw by the workmanship that they were foreign, while his well-polished brown shoes had unmistakably been made in either Spain or Italy. Each European country has its own distinctiveness in male footwear.

The man's companion was *chic*, though rather stout. She was dark-haired and dark-eyed, with a somewhat sallow complexion. As they gazed into a milliner's shop the man addressed her in French.

Then they passed on, while I walked with "Bee-bee" into Piccadilly.

"You'll know them again—eh, Heathwaite?" remarked my friend.

"Certainly. I could pick them out of thousands," I replied. "But I can't see what the motive is."

"The Chief certainly has some motive," was his reply. "You've only to obey orders."

"Yes," I sighed. "Rotten luck for me. I was going up to a shooting-party in Perthshire to-morrow night. Instead, I'm off abroad again as soon as that fellow goes."

"Yes. But you'll have to have your eyes skinned. He's staying at the Grosvenor, and may slip away to the Continent by any train from Victoria."

"I shall be staying at the Grosvenor this evening," I replied with a smile.

"Coming into the Club?" he asked as we passed the Army and Navy.

"No thanks, old chap. I've an appointment. So long!"

"Take care of yourself," he said cheerily, and we parted.

I went direct to the Carlton, where my great friend Myrtle Merriman was staying with her father. The latter had gone into the City on business, and Myrtle was awaiting me in the palm court.

I apologised for being late, but she forgave me at once, and we had tea together, though it was as yet only four o'clock. She looked sweeter and more dainty than ever. My only regret was that I was abroad so much, and that our meetings were so infrequent. I had accepted the invitation of Lord Twybrook, a friend of Mr. Merriman, to go up to Auchterglen on the morrow, and Myrtle and her father were going too. But now I had to explain to the girl that duty called me abroad once again.

I had only been back from Italy a fortnight, and during the greater part of that time I had been down in Cornwall making some inquiries for the Chief. And now I was engaged upon a strange mission which might take me into any quarter of Europe at any moment.

"It's really too bad, Claud," the girl declared. "I was looking forward to such a jolly time. Lord Twybrook's shooting-parties are always great fun."

"And I was looking forward to it just as eagerly," I said. "But in an hour's time I have to take up my abode at the Grosvenor Hotel at Victoria Station, with my identity effaced, ready to go anywhere at any moment."

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"Can't you tell me something of your mission?" she asked, looking at me with her wonderful eyes.

"Unfortunately no," was my reply. "What the Chief tells me is in strictest confidence. I, however, know that it is a matter of deepest concern to the nation, and of the greatest urgency."

"And you don't know where you will be going?"

"I haven't the ghost of an idea," I laughed. "But if it were not that duty called me, I would certainly have gone up to Perth with you to-morrow night. As it is, I suppose, I shall have no shooting this season," I added with a sigh.

After an hour I rose, and taking her small, soft hand in mine, bade her farewell, promising to write to her home in Cheshire telling her my whereabouts. Then I went round to Dover Street, where my man, Quaife, packed an extra bag beside my usual travelling kit. In this bag he placed a faded old suit, much worn and frayed, a pair of old boots, and a greasy cloth cap, which I thought I might perhaps require. And with the three suit-cases I duly arrived by taxi at the Grosvenor, where I took a room on the third floor.

The fair-bearded foreigner who had registered at the hotel as Oscar Grafström, a member of the Swedish Riksdag, ate his dinner alone in the railway restaurant at the South Eastern station of Victoria that evening. His female companion had disappeared. She was no doubt staying at another hotel.

After dinner he strolled leisurely along Victoria Street and up Whitehall to Piccadilly Circus, where he called for the lady at the Regent Palace Hotel. Then both went to a theatre.

While there I was afforded an opportunity of examining the lady at closer quarters. She had the appearance of a Southerner, but her nationality I could not determine. The name by which she was known in London was the Baronne Marumo, which was certainly Japanese. But her appearance was not that of an Asiatic. She wore round her neck, suspended by a thin platinum chain, set with diamonds, one of the most magnificent pieces of carved Chinese jade I had ever seen.

Three days went by. Grafström met the Baronne constantly and they went about together seeing the sights of London. Really there seemed nothing extraordinary in their acquaintance, or in their movements.

On the fourth evening the Baronne came to dine with Grafström at the Grosvenor, and afterwards, instead of going to the theatre as usual, they ordered the taxi-driver to take them to the Savoy Hotel. I dared not follow, but Cauldwell, a smart figure in a dinner-jacket, who was lounging in the hall ready to act upon any signal from me, entered another cab and drove after them.

He returned just before midnight, and entering my room, sat upon the edge of the bed and lit a cigarette.

"Well," he said, "I found them at the Savoy sitting in the lounge talking to a very pretty young French girl. They were there for ten minutes or so; then at the girl's invitation they went up in the lift. I made inquiry of one of the reception clerks and learnt that the girl's name is Mademoiselle Marguerite Ricard, from Marseilles, and that she has taken a private sitting room—rather unusual for a girl travelling alone."

"You did not arouse the reception clerk's suspicion, I hope?" I said.

"Not in the least. He doesn't know me. He no doubt thought the girl's good looks attracted me, and that I had inquired out of curiosity."

I reflected for a few moments. Then I said:

"You'd better take up your quarters here, Cauldwell. I shall move to the Savoy."

Half-an-hour later I paid my bill, and packing my kit hurriedly drove over to the Savoy, where I took a room which faced the Thames on the fourth floor. Unfortunately I could not obtain one in the vicinity of Mademoiselle's.

I did not see her until noon on the following day, when I found her seated in the lounge, a very pretty, dark-eyed girl of about twenty, extremely well-dressed and thoroughly Parisian in her smartness and general "turn out." As I passed her I caught a whiff of one of the latest and sweetest perfumes.

Our eyes met, and I took care not to conceal the fact that I was consumed with admiration. But I passed on into the big restaurant, and there chatted with the *maître d'hôtel*. When I repassed through the great red-carpeted lounge I found that the persons she expected were with her, namely, the Baronne and Monsieur Grafström. They sat together chatting, after which they went into Bond Street, where the Baronne called at several shops, and later on they lunched at the Berkeley.

While they were there I took a taxi to the Grosvenor to hear Cauldwell's report.

"There's something funny in the wind," he declared. "This morning Grafström had a visitor—old Andrescu!"

"Andrescu!" I echoed, much surprised.

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"I thought Andrescu had gone back to Poland!"

"So did I. We have no report that he has returned. But he called on the Swede about ten, and they were together for a couple of hours."

"That complicates the situation considerably," I said. "Andrescu knows me well—he has good cause to do so after the affair in the Rue de Challiot."

"Yes. You'll have to exercise great care if you are to be successful," my colleague said. "But for the life of me I can't discern what is intended."

"Some infernal trickery, no doubt," I replied. "If Andrescu is implicated in it we may expect some devil's work."

And we were not disappointed, as was afterwards proved.

The mysterious quartette met frequently, though curiously enough Mademoiselle was never introduced to old Andrescu. This I could not understand. When one watches a *complot* one has ever to keep an eye upon the most attractive female member of the circle. Mademoiselle Marguerite was certainly unusually good-looking. I think that visitors staying at the Savoy at the time were very interested in her. I only judge by what I saw at dinner and at supper.

As for myself, I was a mere unimportant visitor who usually took his meals elsewhere—at my chambers, truth to tell—and lounged about the hotel to watch.

One morning I was told by one of the hall porters who knew me well that Mademoiselle was about to leave. He came up to my bedroom at nine o'clock—just after I had dressed.

"Who is the girl, Green?" I asked.

"I don't know, sir. But she's pretty fly. French, of course, but she has a lot of men visitors. And she spends lots of money on cigars and liqueurs for them."

"She's always been alone—eh?"

"Always, sir. That Mr. Grafström seems to be her most constant visitor."

"And the Baroness?"

"Oh! She doesn't come so much as she used to. They're a queer lot, sir, but I hear that the girl pays her bill regularly."

"Do you know anything more?" I inquired of him.

"Not exactly, sir. But the young lady is carrying on some funny game, I believe."

"Oh! Why do you suspect that?" I asked innocently.

"Well, the night before last when I was on night duty a Marconi cable came for her at about three o'clock in the morning. I wondered whether I should waken her, but when I took it I saw it was only very lightly stuck down. So I lifted the flap and read it."

"What was in it, Green?" I asked eagerly, with a laugh.

"Nothing that I could understand. It had been sent off from some ship to Clifden, in Ireland, and consisted of a row of figures. I sent it up to her by the chambermaid at eight o'clock."

"Figures! Was it a code?"

"Yes. Groups of seven figures each."

He could tell me nothing else, so I packed my traps and left it to him to let me know later when Mademoiselle was leaving, and what was her destination.

At ten o'clock he met me in the smoking-room, outside the American bar.

"The young lady has rung up and obtained a seat in an aeroplane going from Croydon at noon to Amsterdam," he told me.

"Very well," I replied.

Ten minutes later I was talking to the Aerodrome at Cricklewood. They knew me when I gave my name, and I ordered a special aeroplane to be got ready at eleven o'clock to take me also to Amsterdam. I told them it must be a fast machine, and that I must be in Amsterdam before the arrival of the mail aeroplane from Croydon. The director of the aerodrome, to whom I was speaking, promised that their crack pilot, should fly me over, adding:

"The weather conditions to-day are excellent. I only wish I were going with you!"

So at eleven I got out of a car at Cricklewood, my bags were placed in the machine, and after I had shaken hands with the pilot and put on flying kit and a helmet, we "pushed off" and took to the air as lightly as a bird.

Soon after rising we ascended in a series of wide circles to about five thousand feet. Below on my left lay London, with the winding Thames, spread out like a map, and ere long we could see before us the Essex coast and the misty sea beyond.

Towns and villages were dotted below us, long, straight lines showed the railways, and winding lines of lighter colour, the highways. Soon we saw Chelmsford, then Ipswich, and afterwards we passed over Felixstowe, and thence out to sea, the machine flying perfectly upon an even keel.

I looked at my watch and saw that Mademoiselle would be soon leaving Croydon. My intention was to arrive before her, change my clothes and watch. There was some very urgent reason which compelled her to leave London so suddenly, something to do with that Marconigram she had received from a ship at sea.

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Cauldwell was still watching Grafström and the Baroness, and would report to me as soon as I could give him an address.

Without anything eventful happening we at length crossed to the Dutch coast, and after making two wide circles, effected a splendid landing at the aerodrome on those flat, green fields outside Amsterdam.

My baggage having been examined by the Dutch Customs officers—for I did not deem it wise to produce my credentials, which rendered me immune from Customs formalities—I showed my passport—in a false name, of course—and then I left my luggage in a shed and awaited the arrival of the mail 'plane from London which crosses daily.

An hour later we saw a speck in the distance which, gradually becoming larger, proved to be the machine in question, from which, on landing, Mademoiselle, laughing gaily with another passenger, a man, stepped out. She asked for a car, and one was obtained.

As I stood near I heard her say:

"I have to take the five o'clock train for Kiel."

That was enough for me. I got to the station at once and took a third-class ticket to Kiel. That night I travelled into North Germany in the same train as Mademoiselle, having previously managed to change from my ordinary clothes into the shabby suit I had brought with me. The express rocked to and fro on its badly-laid line all night, until in the early morning we were at the great naval port of the Germans, the head of the much-vaunted Kiel Canal.

Dressed as a workman, I blundered out of my compartment, hardly awake, I admit, but Mademoiselle was before me, very sprightly and alive.

A porter approached her, and I heard her give orders to him in very good German:

"Take my things across to the boat for Korsor. I am going to Copenhagen. There are three small boxes. But one of them—the brown trunk—is extremely fragile. Be extremely careful of it—extremely careful! If you are not—well—well"—she laughed merrily—"I shan't pay you anything!"

That incident struck me as curious. She had only hand-luggage when she had arrived in Holland by air. Whence had come the three trunks?

"I will be very careful, Fräulein," replied the elderly German porter.

I took my morning coffee, and then sent a telegram to Myrtle in Cheshire, for I knew that the steamer to Korsor did not leave for an hour after the arrival of the night express from Flushing. It is always cold and cheerless on the quay at Kiel. I had been there a dozen times, and knew it well.

The morning turned out bright and sunny as we steamed up the Belt between the green islands of Denmark, touching only at Naksov to land the mail, and then across to the little port of Korsor. During the whole of the time Mademoiselle, wrapped warmly in a thick travelling-cloak, sat in a deck-chair chatting with one of her fellow-passengers, apparently a Swedish woman.

Naturally, I wished to avoid notice, and dressed as I was in shabby clothes, I travelled third-class.

Arrived at Korsor, I watched her enter the train for Copenhagen, and then I got into the last compartment. In due course we arrived, about five o'clock, at the clean, spick-and-span Danish capital, whereupon the young lady entered the omnibus of the Hôtel Helsingor, the recently-constructed place in the Bredgade, not far from the Royal Palace.

Content with the knowledge of her destination, I drove first to the house of a man named Poulsen, who was of great service to us during the War, for he had lived at Tondern in Schleswig, where the Germans had established a Zeppelin base.

He was surprised to see me, but nevertheless he allowed me to change my clothes, wondering, of course, the reason and why I was in Denmark. Afterwards I had a chat with him, and later on drove to the Hôtel d'Angleterre, where I had stayed several times previously.

An hour later I reported by means of a code telegram my whereabouts to Whitehall, asking that Cauldwell should communicate with me immediately.

When I awoke next morning, a waiter brought me a telegram with my coffee. It was from London, and read: "Cauldwell left London unexpectedly. Whereabouts unknown."

So it was evident that Grafström and the Baronne had departed from London and that Cauldwell had followed them.

In the days that followed I kept a pretty strict surveillance upon Mademoiselle Ricard. In this I was assisted by Poulsen, who happened to be on friendly terms with the *concierge* of her hotel. Her only visitor, it seemed, was a tall, fair-haired young man of about twenty-three, the son of an insurance broker named Rovsing, who had offices in the Vestre Boulevard.

The pair seemed to be always together, lunching or dining, or else at the Dagmar, the Casino, or the Tivoli Gardens. That young Rovsing called upon the girl on the

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The two men made a desperate attempt to escape, and Andrescu, finding himself cornered, drew a revolver and shot himself dead. [*Page* 404, *col.* 2.]

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evening of her arrival showed them to be old friends.

It was plain, too, that the young fellow was spending a good deal of money in entertaining her—more than one would believe he could afford. His father was a well-to-do man, but the son was employed in some capacity in the editorial department of one of the daily papers of Copenhagen, and Continental journalism is never a very lucrative profession.

I watched and waited. I waited in patience until I grew unutterably bored. Poulsen was at my disposal, but he, of course, could discern no motive why I should be so intent upon watching the young French girl and her lover.

Late one night, after I had been to the variety performance at the Tivoli, and had eaten my supper amid gay surroundings at the Continental, I returned to my hotel and ascended to my room.

Scarcely had I entered it when the door opened and Cauldwell entered.

"By Jove!" he gasped in a low voice. "I'm glad you are still here. I don't know what is happening."

I saw by his face that he was both puzzled and scared.

"Well?" I asked. "What's happened to you?"

"Lots. An under-porter at the Grosvenor came to my room at three o'clock one morning and said that Grafström had ordered a car from the garage, and that he was starting for Scotland at seven that morning. I was soon about. I got round to the garage, saw the driver who had been ordered to take him, and, paying him ten pounds, told him to wire me what occurred. Two days later I had a message to say he had dropped his fare at the Station Hotel in Hull, and had been sent back to London."

"Hull? Then he intends to get across here?"

"Exactly. But though I rushed up to Hull by the next train, I ascertained that the man had hired another car next day and driven on to Scarborough, where I lost all trace of him."

"That's bad," I said. "What about Andrescu—and the Baroness?"

"Ah! That's the point. While I left them to follow the elusive Swede they left London."

"So they suspect us!" I exclaimed at once. "We've committed some blunder. Either you have, or Mademoiselle knows that I have followed her here."

Cauldwell agreed. The trio whom I ordered him to watch had very cleverly slipped through his hands. As an ex-inspector of the Special, or political, branch of Scotland Yard he was a man of vast experience in the ways and means of secret surveillance. He, with three of his colleagues, was always held in readiness to assist me or those associated with me.

Up my sleeve I laughed at his simplicity. Grafström had, no doubt, discovered that he was being watched, and had set to work deliberately to divert Cauldwell's attention from the old Roumanian and the stout Baronne. He had pretended flight in secret in order to allow his associates an opportunity of getting away from England.

The public submit to irritating regulations concerning passports, but they little dream of the hundreds of false and perfectly imitated passports with visas and photographs, which pass the officials at ports and frontiers daily. Indeed, to the international criminal the passport is a voucher of good faith and respectability, instead of being a barrier against entry.

As I sat in discussion with Cauldwell that night I saw that he had been cleverly duped. That old Andrescu was a master of the art of subterfuge I had long known. Once he had misled me in Barcelona in a most ingenious manner. And here he was again at his old tactics!

"We must pick them up again," I said decisively. "There's some devil's game in progress, and it is for us to learn what it is, and to combat it."

"I agree. But what shall we do now?" he asked.

He was in a quandary, so I sent him to bed, and promised to think over the unexpected situation. And this I did.

Next day passed uneventfully, but at night, when the man, Poulsen, came to report to me, he said that he had seen nothing of Mademoiselle Ricard the whole of that day. At first I attributed this to the fact that the weather had been cold and windy, as it so often is in Denmark, and that she had perhaps contracted a chill. Therefore she had, in all probability, remained in her room. But when she did not appear the whole of the following day I began to grow uneasy. So I sent Cauldwell along, as a stranger, to make inquiry at the bureau of the hotel.

He returned in a state of great excitement.

"There's a mystery concerning that girl!" he told me quickly. "The hotel clerk says that Mademoiselle went out alone at seven o'clock at night on the day before yesterday, but she has not yet returned."

"Gone!" I gasped. "Surely not?"

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"I watched her go out at seven o'clock on Tuesday," Poulsen said. "She was dressed warmly, and wore furs. She is in the habit of meeting young Rovsing every evening, so I did not follow."

"Well," said Cauldwell, "she hasn't returned. The hotel people say that her room is just as she left it. Her baggage is still there—all except one trunk which she sent away three days before."

I wondered whether it was the trunk of which she had been so careful on the landing-stage at Kiel. And if so, what did it contain?

The question was whether Mademoiselle had decamped without paying her bill and had left her luggage behind. If so, then it was certain she had gone to keep a secret rendezvous with Grafström, the Baroness, and the wily old Andrescu.

She had slipped through our fingers, just as the other three had done!

We now set to work to watch her lover, but from his movements and his constant inquiries, we came to the conclusion that he was just as puzzled as we were. Mademoiselle had very cleverly succeeded in escaping from Copenhagen. With so many communications by land and water, it is a very easy matter to get away from the Danish capital. There are dozens of points along the coast where one can cross to Sweden, to Norway, or to Germany.

I longed to go to the Hôtel Helsingor and make a few inquiries myself. But it would not be a discreet move, for I had no desire to reveal my identity. Further, I felt very sure that I should be compelled to report to the Chief my complete failure to discover what he desired. Moreover, every moment was of extreme importance. The plot—for one was no doubt in progress—might be carried out in spite of my efforts to prevent it.

That the girl's lover was in ignorance of her whereabouts was proved. Poulsen discovered that the pair had first met in Bergen about a year before, and that she had written to him hurriedly telling him of her intended visit to Copenhagen, where she was to meet her "uncle."

The uncle was, of course, a fictitious personage invented in order to provide a motive for her sojourn in Denmark.

Four days went past and I was about to pack my traps and return to London, when there appeared in the *Aftonbladet*, one of the principal Stockholm newspapers, a report which described the finding of the body of a young girl in the Saltsjön, that long arm of the Baltic which reaches up to the many quays of the city.

The body had been discovered by some fishermen off the island of Beckholmen. The face had been terribly disfigured, evidently by a heavy blow from a stick, but beyond her clothing there was nothing to establish her identity further than the fact that she wore a small, plain platinum ring.

That latter fact decided me. Within an hour, accompanied by Cauldwell, I was on the boat crossing to Malmo, on my way to Stockholm, where I arrived that evening.

The police took me to the mortuary where the body was lying, and I at once identified it as that of the girl who called herself Mademoiselle Ricard. The ring I recognised instantly.

That the girl had been brutally murdered and her body thrown into the water was quite plain. But why—and by whom?

To the Stockholm police I represented that I had heard of the girl being reported missing from the hotel at Copenhagen, and had wondered whether the body was that of Marguerite Ricard, whom I knew by sight. For this they thanked me, and were soon in communication with the Hôtel Helsingor by telephone.

As might be imagined, poor young Rovsing had a terrible fright as well as a rude shock when he received a visit from the Chief of the Copenhagen detective service, who told him of the death of his sweetheart and asked him what he knew.

Unfortunately, he could not account for his absence from Copenhagen on the evening of the girl's disappearance, so in the end he was arrested and brought to Stockholm, where he was charged with the crime.

There was an utter absence of motive and the accusation seemed absolutely weak and unfounded, otherwise I should have revealed myself and come forward to testify as to watching the pair. As I expected, the young fellow was released three days later, and returned to Denmark.

Meanwhile, the Stockholm police were searching everywhere for clues.

I followed young Rovsing back home, and next morning sought him in private. I told him I wished to speak with him in strictest confidence, therefore he walked with me to my hotel, and in a private room I put several questions to him.

He was a nice boy, and answered me quite frankly.

"Of course, I know that this affair must be painful to you," I said in French. "But perhaps we can be of mutual assistance to each other." Then I revealed to him who I was, at which he was greatly surprised.

"I met Mademoiselle Marguerite last year

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at the Hôtel Norge, in Bergen," he said. "She was with an elderly man—a Roumanian whom I believed to be her father."

"Andrescu was the name, was it not?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied. "She made me believe she was Roumanian, but had been born in France. But now I know different—I know all about her strange career and her strange associates. She told me only a week before she left so suddenly."

"Told you!' I echoed. "What did she say?"

"She confessed that Andrescu was not her father, and that she had been drawn quite unconsciously and against her will into a revolutionary plot to assassinate one of the most prominent of your English statesmen by means of time-bombs fashioned to represent lumps of coal, which were to be placed in the coal-scuttle of his private room in Whitehall. Andrescu, a Swede named Grafström, and a woman who poses as a Baroness are implicated in the affair."

"Yes," I said. "And what else?"

"She made some further disclosures on the following day, telling me that she had for a long time cut herself adrift from her evil associates, but Andrescu had threatened her with death if she dared to reveal the truth, or to withdraw from the plot. The man seemed to have hypnotised her."

"Did she tell you she intended leaving Copenhagen?"

"No. She told me that she did not wish to have anything further to do with the two men and the woman, who were members of a desperate revolutionary group in Germany, whose object was to commit all sorts of outrages against the English," he said. "Further, she told me that the bombs which were to be used in London were in a box in her room. They had been delivered to her on her arrival in Amsterdam, and she had orders to send them to Andrescu, who, owing to watch being kept upon him and his two associates in London, was now in hiding in Paris The bombs were ingeniously concealed and marked as samples of coal from an imaginary mine in Westphalia."

"And she sent off the box?"

"Yes. She told me she had sent it, and with a note telling Andrescu that she had decided to have nothing further to do with the affair. Though she had been well provided with funds in order to act as decoy in certain desperate plots which these people had carried out, she had, at my instigation, decided to earn her living honestly."

"Ah! Then it is quite plain that Andrescu feared lest she might reveal the truth," I remarked. "Did she tell you where he was in hiding in Paris?"

"Yes. She gave me his address," the young fellow replied, and, taking out his pocket-book, he read it to me, and I noted it upon my shirt cuff.

"I cannot think why she did not tell me that she was leaving Copenhagen in secret," he added.

"Because no doubt Andrescu had compelled her to go to Stockholm and there meet him finally. Having told you what she did, she hesitated to tell you of her secret journey, which has, unfortunately, ended fatally."

"Do you think so?" he asked with a sigh, for I saw that, notwithstanding her faults, he had been genuinely in love with her.

"Yes, I do," I replied. "To me it seems quite plain that Andrescu and his associates, fearing lest Mademoiselle should make disclosures, urged her to go to meet them in secret in Stockholm for the last time. The poor girl walked into the trap so cleverly prepared, and her face having been battered, her body was flung into the stream."

Next day I was back again in Stockholm, and, having told the police what I had learnt, search was at once made for traces of Andrescu. It was soon discovered that a man answering to his description had stayed at an obscure hotel in the poorer quarter of the town, and that on a certain night a girl answering the description of Mademoiselle had called for him, and they had gone out together. Neither of them had been seen again.

Four days later I was seated with the Chef de la Sureté in Paris, to whom I related the whole story, just as I have given it here.

An hour later we went with three detectives to the address which the dead girl had given, and there we found Andrescu, Grastrom, and the pseudo-Baroness, while in the apartment stood the trunk containing the specimens of "coal."

The two men made a desperate attempt to escape, and Andrescu, finding himself cornered, drew a revolver and shot himself dead.

Grafström and the Baronne Marumo were subsequently tried as enemies of France, and while the man was sent to Devil's Island for life, the woman was sent to prison for fifteen years.

Poor Mademoiselle Marguerite! Hers was, indeed, a sad end!

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OPEN TO DOUBT.

The cinema producer was giving his final instructions for the production of Part 19 of *The Adventures of Annie*.

"Mr. Daring," he addressed the curly-haired hero, "for realism purposes I have borrowed a real live lion for this act. The animal will pursue you for five hundred feet."

Mr. Daring interrupted him. "For five hundred feet?"

"Yes," replied the producer. "No more than that. Understand?"

The hero nodded dubiously. "Yes, I understand, but—does the lion?"

A FAMILY FAILING.

The most successful boy at a recent school examination was, on prize day, called upon to give a speech.

He began thus:

"'Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears.'"

"Well," sneered the mother of an unsuccessful pupil, "he wouldn't be his own mother's son if he didn't want to borrow something."

THAT AFTER-DINNER FEELING.

LADY: "You said you were too weak from starvation to work. Surely now, after I've given you such a good dinner, you feel equal to doing a job in my garden?"

TRAMP: "Your dinner has done me so much good, lady, that I feel more than hequal to work; I feel *sooperior* to it!"

NO QUESTIONS ASKED!

She was very young and unsophisticated.

"I understand," she said, "that for quite a small sum I can insure my house for £200 in your company?"

"That is so," said the agent. "If your house burns down, we pay you £200."

"And do you make any inquiries as to the cause of the fire?" she asked.

"We make the most careful inquiries, madam," was the reply.

"Oh," said the young woman in tones of disappointment, "I thought there was a catch in it somewhere."

WHY, INDEED!

Why, if ice freezes, is it frozen,
When your best girl is squeezed, not squozen?
Why, if I fail, call me a failure,
When, should I ail, I'm not an ailure?

Why call a baby cat a kitten,
When a small mat is not a mitten?
Why should a playwright make a play,
When haywrights do not make the hay?

Why label heavy drinkers drunkards,
When heavy thinkers are not thunkards?
Why should I say a horse I rode,
When on a slide I slid, not slode?

Why should a thing I make be made,
When what I take will not be tade?
Why classify all cows as cattle,
When bows collectively aren't battle?

Why is it tell's derived from tale,
When hell has naught to do with hale?
Why should there be a duck and drake,
When there's no snuck, but only snake?

R. B. Everett.

HE WORE WELL.

Two countrywomen were arguing on the matter of thrift.

"D'ye see that purse?" demanded one, with a triumphant air. "It's the one I bought when I was married twenty years ago, and it's as good as new yet."

"That's nothing!" sneered her friend. "You know my husband, John?"

"Of course I do. What about him?"

"Well, he's my first husband, and you've had three. Don't you preach thrift to me!

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A RESPITE FOR PUSSY.

"Mother, shall I have a little sister one day?"

"Why?"

"Well, it gets rather a bore always teasing the cat."

MERCENARY MAN!

Two young men were talking together when Fred, the older of the two, became suddenly very confidential.

"I am rather worried," he said. "I can marry a wealthy widow whom I don't love or a poor girl whom I do love intensely. What shall I do?"

"Listen to your heart," advised his companion, "and marry the one you love."

"You are right, my friend. I will marry the girl."

"Then can you give me the widow's address?"

THE SOONER THE BETTER.

In a Great Western Railway carriage on the way up to London a youth had disturbed and annoyed the other passengers by loud and insane remarks during the greater part of the journey.

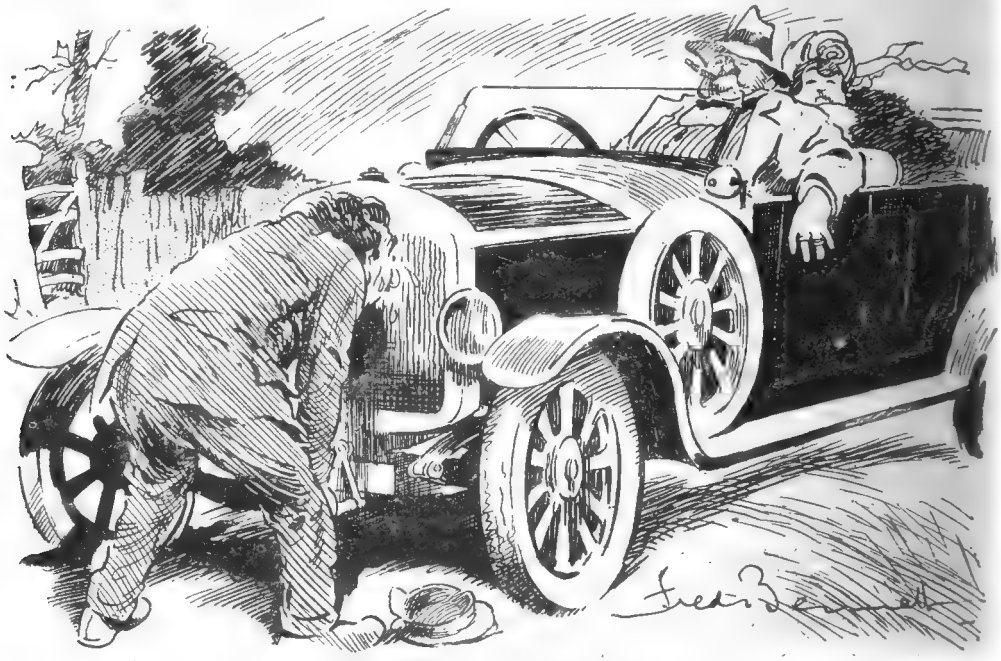
As they passed the Hanwell Lunatic Asylum he remarked: "I often think how nice the asylum looks from the railway."

"Some day," growled an old gentleman, "you will probably have occasion to remark how nice the railway looks from the asylum."

SOLD ON THE PREMISES.

JACK: "Where does Cora get her fine complexion from—her father or her mother?"

EDITH: "Oh, from her father. He's a chemist."



GETTING THE WIND UP.

WAR PROFITEER (to chauffeur who is trying to start jibbing car): "Look out you don't overwind it!"

HARDLY COMPLIMENTARY.

"Miss Hunt, do let me help you to more pudding."

"Well, thanks," said the young woman; "I will take some more, but only a mouthful, please."

"Emma," said the hostess to the parlourmaid, "fill Miss Hunt's plate."

A SEARCHING INQUIRY.

In an engineering works a good deal of pilfering had been going on among the men. The proprietor spoke to the foreman, an Irishman, about the matter, telling him that if he had any suspicions he was to search the men before they left.

One evening Pat had occasion to do this, and while in the act of telling his men to take their coats off the proprietor came by.

"Well, Pat, what is missing now?" he asked.

"A wheelbarrow, sir," was the Irishman's answer.

DISASTROUS RESULTS.

A fussy bachelor engaged a cook, whose professional skill was conspicuous by its absence.

He bore up bravely for one dyspeptic month against her culinary experiments. Then he hinted that her talents were wasted upon him, and she departed.

Shortly afterwards she applied to him for a reference. He gave it thus:—

"Mrs. Hawes was employed by me for one month as cook. Left on account of illness—my illness."

A CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE.

FIRST NAVVY: "Ye know, it's hard lines on Joe, 'im bein' so short-sighted."

SECOND NAVVY: "Why? Yer don't need good eyesight for our job!"

FIRST NAVVY: "No, but 'e can't see when the foreman ain't lookin', so he has to keep on workin' all the time."

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A WATCHING BRIEF.

SHARING THE HONOURS.

Mabel was gazing through the window of the local photographer, her eyes glued on a certain picture. It was the school group taken at the recent treat.

"Lily!" she shrieked excitedly to her friend. "Come 'ere!"

"What's the matter?" asked the other.

"You see Elsie Green there in the third row? An' you see the pair o' boots behind Elsie?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's me."

MONEY WELL SPENT.

An elderly man was persuaded by one of his sons to go with him to a football match.

The son, intent upon giving his father a good time, had booked two seats in the grand stand.

"Now," said the son joyfully, "you'll see more excitement for your seven-and-six than you've ever seen before."

The old man grunted.

"I don't know so much about that," he said dismally. "Seven-and-six was all I paid for my marriage licence!"

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"THAT'S WHERE THE MONEY GOES."

CUSTOMER: "What, fifty pounds for the frame? Why, that is dearer than the picture!"

ART DEALER: "Yes, but the frame was made by a trade union workman, and the picture was painted by a mere artist."

THE HIDDEN HAND.

A lady dragging her young nephew by the hand through a crowded tube station, was forced to let go of him at the lift in order to show her tickets. This done, she at once put her hand behind her and resumed her firm grasp, when a gruff voice from the rear remarked:

"You've got 'old of the wrong 'and, Miss."

STRATEGY!

A shabby man slouched into the pawnshop.

"How much will yer give me for this overcoat?" he asked, producing a faded but neatly-mended garment.

Isaac looked at it critically.

"Four shillin'," he said.

"Why," cried the man, "that coat's worth ten bob if it's worth a penny!"

Isaac sniffed.

"I can't give you more than four," he said. "Four shillin' or nothin'."

"Well, here's yer four shillin's," said Weary Willie. "This overcoat was hangin' outside yer shop, and I was wonderin' how much it was really worth."

PEACE AT ANY PRICE.

He was a very cautious little man, and he was on his death-bed. His clergyman called to give him spiritual comfort.

"Do you renounce the devil and all his works?" asked the parson.

"D-don't ask me that," came the quivering reply. "I am going to a strange country—and I don't want to make enemies!"

SACRILEGE!

THE GIRL: "Look 'ere, Bert, ain't you got no more sentiment than to crunch peppermints while there's a love scene goin' on?"

PRACTICALLY SUICIDE.

Algy was the *beau ideal* of a knut, but a very poor shot. After many fruitless attempts to bring down a bird, he fired at a pheasant that started up near him. Some feathers floated to the ground.

"A hit that time, anyhow," said he.

"Yes," said the gamekeeper, "they will fly into it sometimes."

NO COMPLAINTS!

The mistress beamed patronisingly on the maid-servant.

"I'm going to get you another chair for the kitchen, Norah," she said.

"Sure, I don't need it, ma'am," replied the girl.

"But you have only one," the mistress persisted, "and you sometimes have company in the evenings, don't you?"

"Only gentlemen, ma'am," replied Norah, dropping her eyes.

CRUSHED!

A well-dressed gentleman was travelling in a third-class railway carriage in Lancashire. He sat down hurriedly next to a nice little girl in shawl and clogs. Suddenly it dawned upon him that he was sitting on her newspaper.

"Here, my dear," said the gentleman pulling the paper from under him and handing it to her; "I'm sorry."

The little girl did not look quite satisfied, but she said nothing till a few minutes later, when the train drew up at a station.

"Please, sir," she then inquired meekly, "may I have my fried fish?"

FOR THE SAKE OF ARGUMENT!

CONSTABLE: "What, sir! Dae ye suggest that I would tak' a bribe? Dae ye insult me, sir?"

THE ERRING ONE: "Oh, excuse me, I——"

CONSTABLE: "Bit now, supposin' I was that kind o' man, how much wid ye be inclined to gie?"

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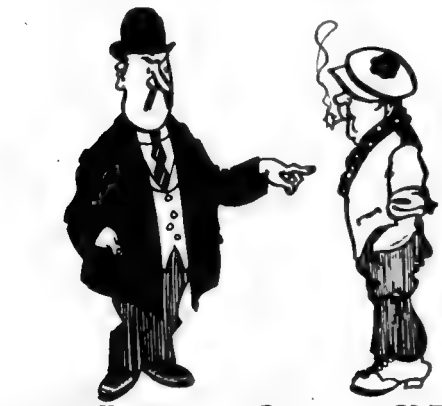
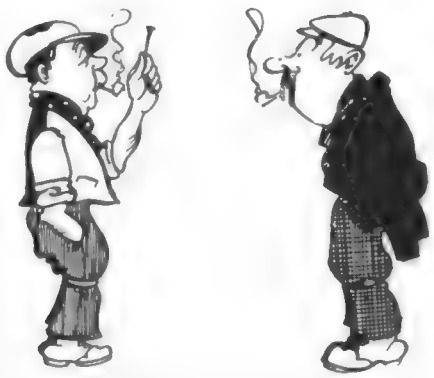
HITTING THE NAIL ON THE HEAD.

The British workman engages in that delightful pastime known as division of labour, and obtains striking results.



FOREMAN BERT DEPUTES WALT FOR THE JOB.



WHO CHOOSES THE NAIL WITH THE AID OF ERB

WHO HANDS IT TO BID

WHO ASSISTED BY PERCE PLACES THE NAIL IN POSITION

THE HAMMER IS SPECIALLY SELECTED BY ALF & ERN

AND THE NAIL IS FINALLY DRIVEN TOWARDS HOME BY LES

D'EGVILLE

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FOOLISH SOUL!

YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER: "I'm afraid those soles I bought from you yesterday were not fresh. We had them for dinner, and my husband said they weren't at all nice."

FISHMONGER: "Well, ma'am, that's your fault, not mine. I've offered 'em to yer every day this week, and you might a' 'ad 'em o' Monday if you'd a loiked."

DESTINATION UNCERTAIN.

DR. SAWYER: "I had a great many more patients this time last year, my dear. I wonder where they can all have gone?"

HIS WIFE: "We can only hope for the best, Ted."

SAVING HIS FACE.

LOCAL PUGILIST: "'Ere, did you say I 'ad a funny face?"
TACTLESS STRANGER: "No. What I said was that if yer grew a beard and then shaved it off folks'd think it was funny!"

AGE HAS ITS USES.

SMALL GIRL (to elderly lady): "Do come again; you've cheered me up considerably."

BORROWED PLUMES.

MISTRESS: "You can have this hat, Reynolds. I shall not wear it again."

REYNOLDS: "That is kind of you, mum. It's the very one my young man likes me in best!"

RESTFUL INTERVALS.

"Good morning, Uncle Joe. Did you sleep well? I'm afraid your bed was rather hard and uneven, but——"

"Oh, it was all right, thank you. I got up now and then during the night and rested a bit, you know."

LESS DISTRACTING!

A young man entered a café for dinner, one day, and soon the band began to play all the liveliest tunes.

After a while he got up from his table and walked up to the conductor of the band and said: "Do you play by request?"

"Oh, yes, sir, we play anything by request." answered the conductor.

"Well," remarked the young man, with a smile, "do you mind playing a game of dominoes while I finish my dinner?"

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The Dusty Coral Road.

By G. B. Lancaster.

Illustrated by Howard K. Elcock.

THOSE who believed in predestination always said that Corbett was damned from the beginning, and he would have saved himself much trouble if he had been as sure as they. But some queer kink in his brain apparently denied what the rest of his body made haste to confirm, and so it was that he had passed thirty by some years and was still sufficiently a white man to get tangled up in one of the most pathetic little romances with which the men of Asuma Beach ever came in contact.

By that time Corbett had been pretty nearly everything which a public school man is not bred up to be. Six separate Island boats had the honour of paying his super-cargo wages until he was booted out of each for drunkenness and insubordination. He had kept books in a store in Fiji and never made the balance tally twice, and he had lived in the native quarter there for nine disreputable weeks, after which the Governor—who, being a white man himself, has to uphold the prestige of the white man—had bribed a planter to take him away and lose him.

He turned up in the Tonga Group after that, teaching the banjo to the King's son in the big coral native-house on Asuma Beach, and, having smashed the instrument over the boy's head on a day of sinful sweat and temper, retired to a whale-boat setting out for the Aucklands while there was yet time.

During the next years he drifted round the South Pacific as derelicts do, casting up on the Beach at intervals as though in some way he felt it home. And, the King having died, there was none to gainsay him.

It was the time he came—seared from hell out of the engine-room of a trading-steamer where he had worked exclusively with kanakas—that the wonderful thing happened to him. The story did not begin like a romance, for the first intimation given the Beach of his reappearance was when the negro in charge of the fountain flung him out of the newly-opened ice-cream and soda store along the front.

The Resident Doctor of the Group—he had a fine house among the screw-pines and caguarinas up the hill—came by in immaculate ducks and shoes and pith-helmet in time to see the chucking out; and, because the manhandling of a white man by a black is rather more of a disgrace in the Islands than elsewhere, he hauled the helpless thing straightway to his surgery and there dosed it with stuff that made it sit up and curse itself back to manhood again.

After that, being a youngish man with a young, invalid daughter whom he worshipped, and a real belief in the Ultimate Good, he talked to Corbett and finally presented him with a suit of decent clothes. Corbett, who had once had a pretty turn with Greek epigram and Latin verse, accepted all he could get in a manner which moved the Doctor's heart, and then went away through the village, staggering a little, in earnest search of someone to whom he could swap the new clothes for a bottle of grog.

The Deputy-Commissioner happened to take dinner with the Doctor that night, and, in discoursing of Beach affairs generally, came eventually to Corbett and quoted a native proverb applicable to the situation.

"'First the Lord made Tongans, then He made pigs, then He made the white man.' After meeting a few of the Corbetts of the world one learns to appreciate the native standpoint."

"Appreciate!" This was the Doctor's pet theory. "We don't give the poor devils a chance. It's the curse of Reuben over again, and we who can go back to England to-morrow if we want, never try to help them lift it. Corbett——"

"Corbett's damned." The Deputy-Commissioner was withered by long living in the tropics, but his eyes were keen as lancets when they looked into men's lives. "He's

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He came near and looked down on the peaked, cameo-pale face and big, dark eyes of the Doctor's invalid daughter.—

in the gutter, and he'll never get up. Corbett's damned."

Corbett was just thinking the same. Being unusually sober he was unusually depressed, and even the sight of the young girls bathing in the open surf, with the sun glinting on the porpoise-brown smoothness of their bodies, and the cooling trade-wind carrying their riotous laughter, did not halt his feet a moment. With the need for the grog working in him he turned into Malcolm's Store, which sold all things, from bolts of gay print to hardware. But before he could proffer his request he was invited to "beat it at the jump" by the two dapper young assistants, who showed prompt signs of following up their invitation with action. Corbett took his dismissal meekly, as he had taken the chucking-out, and went on.

In a rotten little house down among the Beach refuse of cocoanut shells, tins, rags, and all else, he found Hotchkiss, a grey and

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—She lay looking at him with those great eyes quickening into light.

drunken beach-comber of fifty years, who stretched gnarled and dirty hands and blinked moist eyes and called him "dear boy." But all Hotchkiss' bottles were empty, and the craving still drove Corbett on. He circled the village by the upper road, where the matted foliage shut him into a great bath of perspiration and the slow-flapping, gorgeous parrots screamed at him until his mouth dried up with his curses. High up among the ferns and vines that netted in the world, orchids gleamed with livid lips and demon eyes, and Corbett began to run stumbling from them as one runs from devils.

Out on the dusty coral road again he heard the boom of breakers coming in with the trade like the roll of mighty drums, and still he ran, with the sensation that heaven and earth were in league against him. A house showed up among slender areca palms and great pandanus-leaves, and he scrambled over the low hedge with a feeling that sanctuary was near. The gay hammock slung between two palm-boles was sanctuary, but he did not know it then, even when he came near and looked down on the peaked, cameo-pale face and big, dark eyes of the Doctor's invalid daughter—the girl of whom the Beach said: "She is eyes only, lacking body and legs."

The hand hanging over the fringed edge was frail and tiny as a child's. The face was a child's, and no one had ever told

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Corbett of her seventeen helpless years of denied maidenhood. She lay looking at him with those great eyes quickening into light; and he, good to look at, despite the flushed face and tumbled hair and the marks of dissipation which her innocence could not read, looked back with a vague acceptance of old standards moving in his dulled brain. This was a lady, despite her youth. He sought to remove the hat which still lay on the shore among the land-crabs outside the ice-cream-soda saloon, and not finding it stood abashed, waiting for her initiative. It seemed to him in some way natural that he should wait her whim, natural that she should put out her tiny hands, crying:

"Oh, where have you come from? I did so want someone to come, for I'm so lonely to-day and the pain is so bad."

Just now Corbett did not remember where he came from, but again that persistence of old standards controlled him.

"I came to stop you from being lonely, I think, and to make you forget the pain."

And then she laughed as a child laughs, and lay back on her gay cushions.

"Come and do it, then. Quick! Quick, before the pain begins again. You'll find a chair over there, and some fruit."

The cool pines and bananas assuaged Corbett's thirst for a little, and her wilful, whimsical power over him seemed to grow with her chatter, so that he had been there perhaps twenty minutes when the Doctor came. And the Doctor, after one amazed glance at the man, was caught like a lover by sight of his daughter's glowing face.

"Oh, Daddy, we're having such a lovely time. He doesn't know anything about me, and I don't know anything about him. So we're just pretending. Come here, Daddy, and I'll tell you. Did you know your Maura was really an Egyptian princess, and Cleopatra was ever so jealous of her?"

The Doctor shot a look at Corbett, now standing with shaking hands gripped on the chair-back and face twitching. Medical knowledge told him that the man was near the end of his powers and certainly no more than half sober. And yet in some way he had brought a light to that dear face and a gaiety to the voice which all the Doctor's arts could not compass. For a few moments he met her light mood with a desperate equal lightness. Then he got Corbett away, and when the surgery door shut behind them Corbett dropped on the first chair and said:

"Give me a nip, for God's sake."

The Doctor gave it, though not for God's sake; and then, as Corbett's brain cleared a little, he looked up half-defiant, half-apologetic.

"She wanted someone to play with, poor little kid. I once had a little sister. I didn't say anything to hurt her, I tell you, o' man."

The Doctor gently guided him to the couch.

"You lie down and get a sleep. I'm going to her," he said.

It was possibly the hardest moment in the Doctor's life when he forced himself to realise that the drunken derelict sleeping in the surgery had done more for his darling than anyone else had done. Some wandering breath of fantasy had touched Corbett with glamour for the sick girl, and she lay talking of him incessantly with her father's hand in hers.

"He is so wonderful at pretending, Daddy. You're the best ever, but you can't pretend very much, you know. And dear old Nursie can't at all. *He* knows all about everywhere, and we played we were in Egypt and Rome and——"

It was a grim face that looked down on Corbett an hour later. Lying with head flung back and those too-wise eyes closed, there was a curious appeal about the young man. Aquiline features and a well-set head do not lose their refinement until long after the inner man has gone to wreck. Lying there Corbett might almost have been worthy to tie the shoe-latchets of the girl who could never have a lover as other maidens had them. Lying there——and then Corbett opened those too-wise eyes and looked up.

The Doctor spoke like one strangled.

"Get up and have a wash. I want to speak to you."

"You might give a chap a drink." Corbett struggled into sitting posture, holding his head in his hands.

The Doctor's voice came from a seemingly great distance:

"Go in there and bathe. Do as I tell you. Then come back."

The man whom the negro had thrown out and the young assistants intimidated did as he was bid. But when he came out twenty minutes later the cold water and the cold drink placed by the bath had done their work.

"Well?" he said, and faced the Doctor as one man may face another.

It was the Doctor who was ill at ease. He had a favour to ask of Corbett, the byword of the Islands, and whether Corbett agreed or not it was likely that the joke would go out and become a byword too.

"You've been a gentleman," he said abruptly. "You talked like a gentleman to my daughter this afternoon."

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"I don't remember what I said this afternoon." Corbett subsided into a chair and looked at his fingers. He felt very weak, for he had not eaten a decent meal for these three days and more. "I talked Roman and Greek legends, I think."

"You amused her." The Doctor steadied his voice with an effort. "She has very little to amuse her. She is not strong, you understand. What would you—— I'd make it worth your while to stay here a little and talk to her, provided, of course, that you behaved yourself. It is just possible that an interest might improve her health." He had never dared allow that hope on his lips before. It sent him giddy for the moment, and he looked at the hunched man sitting on the couch and felt himself torn with a wild mixture of passions—prayer, hate, desire to kick the brute out, savage resentment that his darling should be soiled by any connection with such a result of the evil of the world.

Corbett considered his fingers. There was opportunity for blackmail here: money, drink, good food and soft lying, so long as he could restrain that ravening beast in himself.

"I can't get along without drink."

"You shall have what is necessary. I'll attend to you so far as your case can be attended to." For a moment the Doctor's face was convulsed. Utter need only was whipping him on to this. "She has taken a fancy to you, and it is rarely enough she does that. If she can be interested she may—— I'd give you the soul out of my body if you could do anything to make her strong again."

In the Doctor's clothes, on the Doctor's couch, Corbett sat still and considered. The cards were tabled now, and this man who had lived on his wits for ten years and more was moved by no emotion but that of a greedy shrewdness. Beauty, romance, tragedy, he had gone past them all. The one thing which mattered now was the amount of cash he could screw out of this old chap for the penance of talking daily mush to that sick kid with the eyes. She certainly had wonderful eyes. He looked up, and Maura would not have recognised the thin, sneering face.

"I'll do it for a week or two, if we can come to terms."

"Then let's get down to it, damn you," said the Doctor.

Before the week was out the Beach was staring aghast at the Doctor's aberration.

"Corbett?" said Lee, when the gunboat came in and he heard the story over cool drinks. "That drunken loafer and little girl Maura? It's criminal."

"They say he doesn't talk to her as he would to other women. It's a fantastic game of some sort. They both pretend."

"The further Corbett gets away from reality the better for all concerned, I should say. But it's a rotten notion, anyway. The Doctor must be mad," said Lee. And to this the rest of the company agreed without reservation.

But the Doctor was not mad, although he lived on the edge of a volcano beside which Etna was a fool. Because he had the skill for it he so nursed Corbett's body that the demon of drink slept a little while and sane living and good food recreated the old decent instincts, for a time. And the magic of that light which never was on sea or land shone among the orange trees and magnolias in the garden up the hill, where the delicate thoughts and fancies of budding girlhood turned for the nonce a drunken derelict into a god, a hero, a Prince Charming, a vital and glorious reality which brought the bloom to her thin cheeks and vigour to her listless limbs.

"I feel as if I live in these places when we talk of them," she said. "A long time ago I made up stories by myself, but they never came really really true until I found *you*."

Corbett's eyes were on the west, where a purple bank of storm was blotting the crimson, streaming glory of the sun. The sea beneath ran in huge, blood-tipped waves, and even the little brown and green village was steeped in blood-colour. The air held the waiting breathlessness which seems to dry a man's very soul in his body, and the wash of the surf down on the coral reef made Corbett run his tongue along his lips with sudden desire for a drink. And then, all unheralded and unsuspected, his demon was upon him again. He got up hurriedly, and she caught at his sleeve.

"Don't go away. I always so hate the feeling of a storm. It makes me so tired. Oh, stay and talk till Daddy comes back."

"I—can't," said Corbett. He wrenched his arm free and went swiftly past the orange-trees and the curtained vines on the veranda, seeking the dining-room where the Doctor kept the small amount of drink allowed him daily. He took it all in one draught, neat, choking it down as though in terror of something which he could not fight. The drink steadied him for the moment. He sat down, looking round as though newly awakened. And here the Doctor found him.

There had been nights before this when he and the Doctor had sat over their cheroots and grinned at one another mirthlessly. For both knew that no power on earth would hold Corbett for long, and each wondered with a carefully-cloaked fear how and when

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Corbett would break out. Now they looked at each other silently, until Corbett said:

"Well, it's come, Doc."

The Doctor slowly laid gloves and whip on the table. He had been riding and the dust was grey on his face. It looked greyer as he turned to the window and flung the shutters wide. After that, silent still, his eyes bored into Corbett with a scrutiny which drove the younger man into sudden fury.

"You've no cause to look like that. I didn't sign on for eternity. I've stuck it three months, and now I'm through. Understand? I'm off down to the village to-night. I——"

"For God's sake be a man!" The Doctor flung himself forward with trembling violence. "Fight it, Corbett. Fight it. You've stood off it long enough to prove to you that you can. If you'll take hold——"

"I don't want to take hold." Corbett sat with hands hanging between his knees and looked at the Doctor impersonally. "I don't want to be brutal, but I'm tired of all this. Fed up. Bored stiff. I want a glorious bust, and, by heaven, I'm going to have it! Thanks to you I've the means now."

"Corbett,"—the Doctor's eyes were full of anguish—"I never thought to pray to any man, but for the love of God try to hang on a bit longer. She's better. She's getting better every day. Lately I've even had hopes that she might walk. I've never known her take such a fancy to anyone before. You've just got to be near her and she is all vitality, all brightness. If you withdraw that influence she—I—by God! You sha'n't withdraw it. I'll kill you first!"

"Oh, rot! What do I care whether you kill me or not?" Corbett raised himself heavily. "There's no earthly sense in making a row, Doc. You know enough about this business to know I'm past putting up a fight."

"I had hoped for her sake——"

"Did you! Wanted me to love her, did you, knowing that she can never be wife to any man? Jolly considerate of you. I don't reckon I owe you much on that score or another. You've dosed me up and kept me on my legs for her sake. And I've let you do it for my own. Now I guess we're about square, and I'll get out and have my flutter."

"You need never come back here."

"I won't. Don't you worry, old top." Manner and voice were as offensive as he could make them. It seemed as though knowledge that the time of his bestiality was near was already having its effect on him. "Give me what you owe me and I'll get out."

His limbs twitched like those of one already struggling in the slough. "Quick, I tell you. I want to go."

He was on the Beach ten minutes later, with money in his pocket for the buying of his shame. And he bought it. For days he bought it, eagerly, wastefully, passing from one drunken bout to another until the time came when he opened his eyes on Bhasa Singh's string bed on the veranda of his house down in the Hindoo quarter and saw the red evening light through the palms.

Behind him was dark, and tinkling laughter where Bhasa Singh's women chattered over the scandal of the day. Before him, down in the narrow street that was bent like a dog's hind leg, someone beat a tom-tom monotonously and someone sang plaintively in the dialect. To Corbett came the strange belief that he was dead, hung between earth and heaven, both of which had spewed him out. Hell was indubitably within himself. He could feel it burning, smell it—only the smell was curiously like cooking breadfruit. The heat pressed on him with its wet hands; pressed on his eyelids. He seemed to be making enormous efforts to open them.

And then it seemed that they were open, staring into scarlet flames which seared and blinded and would not let him go. A face formed in the flame; a face like a silver rose, pure, tender-eyed, sweet-lipped, shining on him like a promise, a salvation. It grew nearer, nearer against the pulsing flame and the black dark; an ethereal, perfect, healing thing which in some strange way belonged to him and which he could not name. Suddenly he knew.

"Maura!" he cried, and the sound was no more than a guttural stutter in his parched throat. He reached his unclean, trembling hands to her, calling again. And then, like a rising bird, a flower-seed borne by the wind, she floated upward into the netted dark of the palms and left him.

It was perhaps an hour later that the Doctor, disturbed by sundry scratchings and sounds without, left Maura's bedside in order to kick the pariah dog away, and the dog he found beating on the door, whining in the dark, was Corbett, half-clothed, unshaven and unwashed, with an empty bottle stuck in his ragged shirt and wild eyes gleaming.

"Let me in, let me in," panted Corbett, and continued hammering.

The Doctor crushed down his first impulse to take the man neck and crop and fling him across the road into the fern.

"What have you come here for?" he said roughly.

"I don't know," said Corbett, beginning

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to whimper. "Something called me, but I can't find it now."

The Doctor was a believer in the Ultimate Good, which comprises many things. Besides, Maura was dying. If this was the messenger the Lord had sent to ease the crossing——. He opened the door slowly, saying:

"Come in, you beast."

Whimpering still, Corbett came in. He felt very sick and weak and lonely, and the strong hands which presently took him and bathed and clothed and fed him were ungentle enough. A drink cleared his head somewhat, although control of his limbs was difficult when he got his directions at last in the Doctor's dry voice.

"Go in and see her now. Tell her you came to see her. Tell her you couldn't stay away. Understand?"

"Come to see her," echoed Corbett. "Yes, of course. To see her."

"Be very gentle." The Doctor's voice sounded like the booming of a great sea. "She is so weak. Tell her you love her. Kiss her."

With a hand running along the wall to steady him Corbett went into the next room with the Doctor following. Maura loved bright colours, and the crimson cushions heaped about her were to Corbett's eyes like the flames that had burnt him. And then, from the midst of them, grew that face like a flower, fair and pure, and infinitely sad with its closed eyes. Caught by an agony which he could not explain, could not understand, Corbett left the protection of the wall and ran stumbling forward with his hands out.

"Maura!" he cried, loud and clear. "Maura!"

A half-hour later the Doctor forced the rim of a glass between Corbett's chattering teeth.

"It won't be long now. Keep it up. Talk to her," he said.

Corbett looked up at the grey face in the grey light.

"How not long?" he asked stupidly.

"You killed her when you left her. But she can only die peaceably in your arms."

The uttermost bitterness of life was in the quiet words, but it failed to pierce Corbett. On his breast Maura turned, opening great eyes dark with love and death.

"Not pretending now," she murmured. "I love you, love——"

Corbett lifted her and put his drink-cracked lips to hers. And so she died, with a smile of completest joy and contentment on her face, and the two men looked at her with neither thought nor speech for each other. At last the Doctor spoke, striving to check the passion in him.

"Give her to me and get out."

Something rose in Corbett then, tearing at the chains which bound him, flaming on his lips.

"She's mine. Mine!"

"Give her to me." The Doctor's shaking voice told that he knew this for sacrilege, desecration.

"She's *mine*," said Corbett, as though he spoke for eternity. Then suddenly giving her into the reaching arms, he slid down by the bed with hidden face. "Oh, God! Oh, God! Oh, God!" he cried, and knew the wrung sinews of a heart that utterly grieves.

It is quite true that Corbett was damned from the beginning. On the Beach he now occupies the hut and the position of Hotchkiss (dropped over-ripe from the tree of life years ago). He is at once the disgrace and the interest of the Beach, for almost nightly the Resident Doctor of the Group comes down from his fine lonely house on the hill to smoke a cheroot in Corbett's dirty little back room where Corbett lies on a littered bed all the time, with black bottles about him. They seldom speak, but once in a while Corbett turns his bemused eyes on the grim white figure and says simply:

"I loved her, Doc."

And the Doctor, with a voice harsh as a saw, raps out:

"I know you did, old chap."

Then comes the silence again, with the sough of the wind and the wash of the tide on the long white beach when the trade comes in over the sea.

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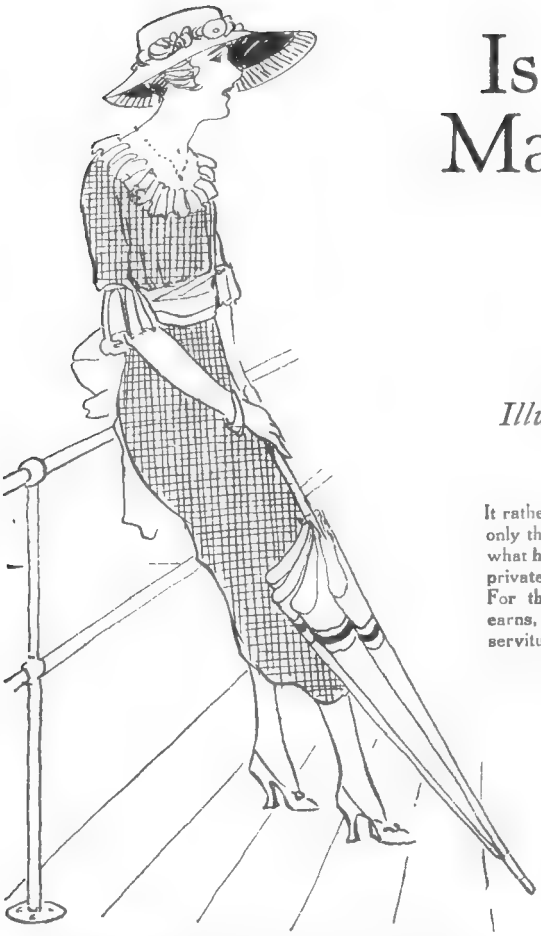
Is the Young Man Doomed?

By
Gordon Street.

Illustrated by G. Thompson.

It rather looks as if he is nowadays. Broadly speaking, only the exceptional young man can afford to marry on what he earns. If his wife has money, or he enjoys a private income, these are happy accidents of fortune. For the average young man who marries on what he earns, and for his wife, life becomes a species of penal servitude, an endless treadmill of trying to follow rising prices with a stationary income.—Ed. R.M.



The seaside girl was dreadfully lonely last summer—the seaside young man hadn't got a bean.

THE seaside girl was dreadfully lonely last summer. I saw her on a dozen piers and parades, and nowhere was she companioned as she should have been. The seaside young man hadn't got a bean.

Now this sad state at the seaside was symptomatic; it was the outward and visible manifestation of what the War has done for the young man. More or less he is broke. Generally speaking his job, if he has one, is not up to much; his prospects are not up to much; his bank balance does not add up to much—very likely it does not add up at all.

This is all wrong. There would be no British Empire to-day but for the young men of this country, yet here they are out of uniform, and, as a whole, hanging on to life by the skin of their teeth. There are lots and lots of ex-officers and other young men who made good in the biggest test of all

There are lots of ex-officers, and other young men, hanging on to life by the skin of their teeth.

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working for £2 and £3 a week. That is what they have got out of the War.

Now what does the young man desire and feel entitled to?

First, a job that will pay him enough for self-respect, with a prospect of something better to work for. A few have such jobs, the majority have not. I know, and so do all of us, several perfectly nice, well-schooled, brought-up young men who can just pay for a clean bed and the most modest of food, and that's about all. A few cheap cigarettes, a shillingsworth at the pictures, and a newspaper represent most of their luxuries. As for prospects, if they eventually make twice as much as they are making now they will be lucky, as things are.

Secondly, a young man desires and feels entitled to marriage when he finds the girl he would like to marry.

Thirdly, he desires and feels entitled to reasonable recreation.

Before the War these things were hard enough to achieve. Now they are practically impossible to the average young man. The cost of everything is up, the standard of happiness—not, *bien entendu*, of luxury—is up, but the young man's pay is not up in proportion. He is less than an also-ran to-day—he is a non-starter.

Who are taking the marriageable girls about to theatres, restaurants, dances, and the like?—middle-aged men. Who, apart from well-lined profiteers, are in week-end possession of the hotels?—middle-aged men. Who, according to the last report of the Registrar-General, are the bridegrooms of to-day?—bachelors of forty-something.

It has been said that success in life depends upon good health more than anything else. I do not propose to argue that point here, but, given brains and good health, what chance has the young man in England to-day?

I recently put this question to a leading business man, a man who rose from apprentice to what he is now—the brain, the driving force, the managing director of one of the biggest "department stores" in the country. This is what he answered:

"It is a young man's own fault if he does not make himself a success—indispensable—between twenty-five and thirty-five. I was twenty-three when I made up my mind to become indispensable to some firm, and I succeeded. I said to myself: 'You have five or six years to make good in.' I did it, and so could any sufficiently determined young man.

"Young men to-day have great chances. We are on the look-out for them for very

A few cheap cigarettes and a shillingsworth at the pictures represent most of the present-day young man's luxuries.

lucrative positions in my firm, for example, but so very many do not seize their chances. They lack 'drive' and application; they do not take themselves or their jobs seriously enough.

"Success is so comparatively easy to achieve, too; it does not demand genius, but it is within the reach of everyone who is absolutely determined to catch hold of it."

I am very much afraid this is the comfortable way many men who have pushed themselves right to the front are apt to talk. Looking back on their experiences, mellowed and toned down till they seem to have been almost roses all the way, they are given to think that only the duds of the world cannot walk into success as they have. They are really quite honest in this—like those old-fashioned, impatient schoolmasters who expected their scholars to leap cheerfully over the *pons asinorum* the first time they came to it.

"I never admit there is such a word as failure," said a millionaire trader to me recently. "It is not in the dictionary—

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It is the middle-aged men who are taking the marriageable girls about to theatres, restaurants, and dances. [*Page* 419, *col.* 1.]

never has been so far as I'm concerned. If a young man is not making good at one thing he should try his hand at something else."

All this is all very well, and it is doubtless admirable advice to those who are so constituted that they are predestined to pay super-tax. But the bulk of young men are not going to the top of the tree, fortunately for the tree. Naturally they want to do well, but to reach the top-most branches means sacrificing everything to work, making a burden of it, and so, despite the "there-is-no fun-like-work" people, they are ready to be content with a perch part of the way up the tree.

Where is the average young man to meet with such reasonable possibilities and an adequate return to-day? Not in a bank, not in a shop, not in the ordinary business office, not in many days of looking through the advertisements of situations vacant. He may find a job, but he will not find much opportunity to establish himself in it so that his days will be long in the land of plenty. The Income tax gatherer alone, taking six shillings in the £, will watch that.

A few big firms do, it is true, hold classes through which to instruct their assistants in the best way to do this and that. But these classes are primarily for the benefit of the firms; they are not held so that assistants may get better jobs and higher wages. If that comes to pass it is in spite of the instruction, not because of it. It is the exceptional young man who scrambles through the barbed-wire entanglements on the road to more money, the exceptionally lucky one upon whom chance smiles in some emergency that does more than mark time in his job.

Now it is not a Bolshevistic thing to say that every young man who contracts to give his time, his vigour, his brain, his interest, his best endeavour to a job of work has the right to certain well-defined things in return. I would name these things as follows:

(a) A minimum of happiness and prosperity.

(b) Sufficient means to enable him to marry and have a family without paying for this natural desire by lifelong hopeless, joyless drudgery.

At present these rights are denied to, let

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us say, seven young men out of every ten. Outside story-books, life and marriage are not to-day adventures coloured with high possibilities, but misadventures.

Who is to blame—the employer or the young man? And with whom lies the remedy?

With the pound worth only fifteen shillings and something in the United States and the State taking the bulk of all post-war commercial profits by means of E.P.D., the only way by which most firms could afford to pay their young men appreciably more would be by reducing the profits of their shareholders or by increasing profits on their turnover.

There is no advantage in discussing either alternative—neither is in the least likely to happen for the sake of the young men.

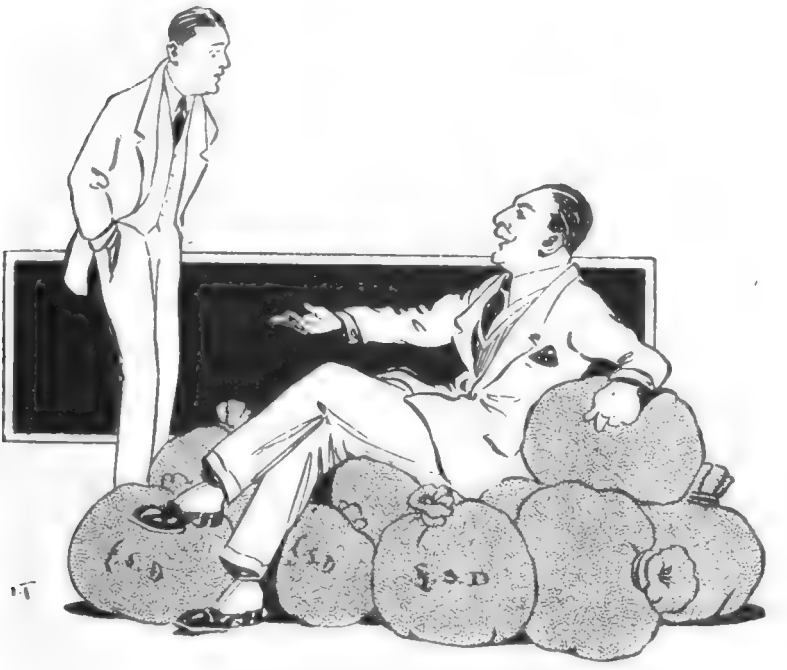
Can he, then, do anything for himself? Individually he may; collectively he might; the odds are that he won't.

Now the last thing wanted is to put the young man in cotton-wool, but here is a hard fact: If the young man is doomed the State is doomed. Young men are, next to boy-babies, our most valuable assets. The birth-rate depends chiefly upon them, and the birth-rate is a mighty important thing in these days.

By a process of exhaustion it seems that the problem of the young man must be put before the Chancellor of the Exchequer. This unfortunate person has his hands pretty full, to be sure, but after all that is what he is paid for.

I would suggest, in order to lighten the burden of the Income-tax on young men who have to choose between it and a wife and family, that a poll-tax should be imposed upon every foreigner who comes to take up a job in this country. The money taken thus from aliens would go towards alleviating the lot of the impecunious young men who are at present perforce doing nothing more nationally useful than paying taxes.

I shall not attempt to try to work out the exhaustive details and calculations of such a scheme, but will leave it at the point of suggestion, since it does seem that the young man of, say, under thirty, who is willing to marry and become a father, ought to be helped and encouraged to do so in every possible way.



Many men who have climbed to the top of the tree talk as if only the duds of the world cannot walk into success as they have.

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The Ishmael of the Heather.

By H. Mortimer Batten.

Illustrated by Harry Rountree.

I.

THE old drover was about at the far end when he gained Windydoor Farm, for the gale that night was a living, devilish, palpable thing, bearing with it the taste of snow. The hind and his wife took the drover in, gave him hot tea and oatcake, and bade him take his dog and shelter for the night in the mistle across the yard. He was a very old man, too old by the true justice of things to be still shuffling from range to range as a vagrant shepherd, but his dog—his sole stock-in-trade, was fit and bright-eyed and iron-limbed.

To-night, as a thousand times before, the two huddled side by side for warmth in a bed of bracken, and when at daybreak the hind went out he found that they were gone—gone on their endless journeying across the hills, though the snow was falling thick and fast.

"Hope the poor old fellow makes out all right," said the hind to his wife. "It's a long pull to Bennan Brow, and the bleakest track in all these hills."

And thereafter they forgot all about him, for ships that pass in the night are not long remembered.

II.

Vic stood on a lofty ridge viewing the snow-white desolation with her keen, piercing gaze. She was hungry—hungry with a cold, gripping hungriness that struck chill through every fibre of her body, hungry with a hunger that swallowed up her sense of loneliness and loss; yet across the bleak expanse of snow there was no sign of life.

True, there was food in her master's pocket, but that was *his*. His poor old hand rested upon it, and though he would not need it now, Vic would have died sooner than take it. She remembered the farm where food had been given her, and leaving behind the ruins of the deserted lead mine high up on the tablelands, she loped briskly along till Windydoor hove in view.

Vic peered over the brow, only her big ears visible from below, and like a wolf of the snowdrifts she sifted every gust. Presently a woman came out and threw something to the hens, and as the door closed again Vic sneaked down, through the open gate and into the yard. It was only some stale potato peelings the woman had thrown out, yet Vic, in her hunger, snatched up a mouthful and stole back the way she had come.

Safely out of sight behind the barn she dropped the nasty stuff and looked covetously at the speckled fowls. Then she crouched back into the stick heap to watch and wait, and presently one of the fowls, bolder or less prudent than the rest, sauntered up to peck the food that she had dropped. The hen was accustomed to dogs, and quite unprepared for the lightning rush from the stick heap that laid her low.

Vic hurried away with her prize, but the snow betrayed her, and late in the afternoon the shepherd set out with his gun to track her down. It was dusk when an hour later he reached the dingy ruins of the abandoned mine—a place ghostly enough at any time, but in this half-light, with the wind moaning among the buttresses, it was dim and uncanny. As he entered the furnace yard there came from somewhere near a snarl so fierce and warning that he turned away quickly—the thunderous, savage snarl of a hound at bay somewhere amidst the dingy ruins just ahead.

Next day Vic went back to the farm more cautiously even than before, but nevertheless she was sighted and had to flee for her life. As she topped the ridge a stinging charge of shot warned her that she had returned at her peril, and so between Vic and the world of men there now arose a clear and definite understanding.

Since her puppy days Vic had been a one

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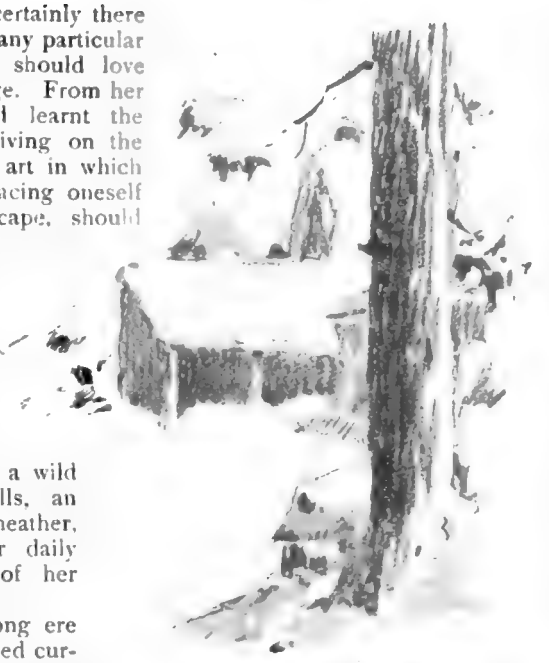
man dog, and certainly there had never been any particular reason why she should love the world at large. From her master she had learnt the night side of living on the land, the chief art in which consisted in effacing oneself from the landscape, should anyone appear.

Thus this homeless, friendless dog, who had learnt to trust but one, who now was gone, became by the natural order of things a wild dog of the hills, an Ishmael of the heather, who sought her daily food in peril of her life.



Nor was it long ere the rumour gained currency that a wild dog was at large on the Bennan Heights, frequenting chiefly the vicinity of the ruined mine. Vic had killed poultry at several different farms ranging over a vast area, coming fox-like in the night, though the marks in the snow left no shadow of doubt that a dog was the culprit.

So far it had never occurred to Vic to molest the sheep, perhaps because they were so familiar, or perhaps because she knew that they, above all things, were sacred to man's possession. She had learnt to stalk the blue mountain hare and to pounce on the sleeping grouse from the ling tufts, but for the most part she lived on mice scratched laboriously from under the snow.

One night, when Vic visited Windydoor, she found a tempting piece of meat lying under the gate through which she was bound to go to gain the yard. The fact that the farm dog was chained up accounted for the morsel falling into her possession, but scarcely had she gulped it than a gripping pain took possession of all her limbs.

Luckily for Vic the hind knew little concerning the strength of the poison he used; luckily too for her Nature's remedy was at hand, and she instinctively flew to it. She had swallowed enough poison to kill a dozen dogs, but the strength of the dose merely assisted Nature's immediate prevention. Near to the gate grew some coarse grass, and Vic, tearing it up frenziedly, swallowed the dry tufts till she choked, and thus got rid of the deadly dose in the ace of time.

But she was weak and stiff, and it required the effort of a lifetime to drag herself over the ridge, where she lay panting in the dead bracken.

At daybreak the hind set out to track her in the snow, taking his dog and his gun. Vic, watching her back trail,

The hen was accustomed to dogs, and quite unprepared for the lightning rush from the stick heap that laid her low.

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saw them coming, and began to drag herself away, again to receive a charge of shot at long range. The shepherd's dog, urged by his master, came on in hot pursuit, but when he was near Vic turned to meet him, wagging her tail, and from him her sex saved her. The big dog merely pranced playfully alongside as Vic toiled on, and so they struck up a friendship—Vic and the faithful servant of her deadliest foe.

All day the shepherd tracked, and Vic, resting, dragging on, resting, lived a day of horror. Never was her pursuer less than a mile behind, yet throughout that day of weary tramping he saw her but once after the opening view. Savagely he cursed his dog as a sentimental fool, but little he thought that he was saving his intended victim from the very fate he had designed for her. He was hoping to wear her down, but in reality he was merely forcing her to work off the effects which, had she rested, might yet have proved fatal. And when the sun went down, rimming the snow-clad hills with purest, brightest gold, Vic's strength surged back and she left her weary pursuer miles behind.

After that day Vic fared better, for the hind's dog proved a priceless friend. He, too, was mainly dependent on his foraging abilities; but with this difference—that he dwelt in the midst of human plenty.

Rag possessed a wonderfully retentive memory for the whereabouts of buried sheep, and when such a banquet was in the wind he usually invited Vic to the feast. Often after long and tedious digging in the ice-bound earth they would ultimately find the carcass to be covered with stones, and there were many nights when Vic went hungry.

In all ways Vic was living the life of the wild wolf, but her manners were vastly different. If at daytime a figure appeared unexpectedly over the ridge, Vic would not turn and run away, but she would hide where she stood, and invariably the man would pass her by. Should he stoop to examine her tracks, Vic would sneak rapidly into a hollow, and so she came to know every yard of the deep watercourses that seamed the moor.

The wild dog of the Bennan Heights was now the sole subject of discussion among the shepherds of the range, and many were the speculations as to what would happen when, ere long, the young lambs were about. Vic must be hunted out and killed before then, or the loss to the shepherds of the range might prove enormous.

One night in early March Vic was quartering steadily up wind, when to her nostrils there came an unfamiliar whiff. It was like the smell of sheep, only more potent, and the difference was just sufficient to break that seal of faith on man's most sacred property. These might be sheep of a kind she smelt, yet not the kind she had been taught to observe; therefore they were wild sheep, and what was wild belonged to her.

As Vic advanced there rose from the whiteness ahead a great grey, shadowy form, bearing upon its brow a pair of towering, upsweeping horns, and behind it were two other shapes, smaller and less significant.

Vic bounded in with a snapping of jaws, and the three grey beasts, snorting and stamping, turned and fled, faster than any sheep alive, seeming scarcely to tap the boulders as they sailed from point to point.

Vic did not pursue. Experience with the mountain hares had taught her to gauge her speed exactly, and now she merely slipped into a hollow so that the very earth seemed to swallow her. The goats, for such they were, instantly became flustered and suspicious by the sudden disappearance of their foe, and, gathering into a frightened group, they stamped and snorted, sifting every gust. Perhaps ten minutes of uncanny silence passed, then into their midst leapt Vic. Snap—slash—snap! went those awful jaws. The Billy turned to fight, but in a second he was fleeing ignominiously after his surviving wife, while the other he left lying in the snow.

Vic had made sure of her supper, and now could afford to pursue for the fun of the thing. Over the flat tablelands she sped, following those bounding, floating specks away along the narrow track of silver sand till the valley brink was reached. Here one looked out over the sleeping dale, radiant with its pretty villages, endlessly peaceful under the stars; but, as Vic bounded on, the track became narrower, more rugged, while to the right the heather line broke into a chaos of shifting boulders. Just ahead there was the Bennan Brow—black, towering, a sheer drop to the shadowy valley depths—and across the face of it ran the track Vic was following.

In her headlong pursuit she never saw the danger till she was in the midst of it, and at her very flank there lay that giddy fall to the world below. The goats knew the place, knew that any that followed, other than their kind, followed to their death, but, at the very brink, Vic pulled up short with a whimper. She had seen in time.

The goats paused and looked back. They had reached a point where the pathway

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ceased and a jagged buttress jutted out. The Billy shook his noble horns and stamped his wonderful hoofs defiantly; then he launched himself into space.

Vic stood and watched. Down, down she saw them go, leaping from point to point, landing here on a shelf the width of a man's hand, ricochetting there from a mere roughness on the surface of the crag, thirty, forty feet at a drop, and Vic, with ears acock, knew what might have happened had she, pressed by hunger, followed them too far.

III.

Vic fed sumptuously that night, and next day the hind, crossing the moor, saw from afar the litter of the kill. He was a wise man in the ways of the wild, and in what he did that day he made but one error, which set all his pains at nought. Poison, he knew, was more certain than guns and endless waiting, so carefully he doctored the carcass; then by each tuft of coarse grass near he carefully concealed a fox trap. He had planned that Vic should take the poison first, and set the traps there ready for when she flew to Nature's remedy.

When darkness fell Vic trotted off to Windydoor, and yapped an invitation to her friend to come and join her at the feast. But the only reply was a mournful howl and the rattling of a chain, so Vic went alone.

Drawing near the carcass her caution grew, for about it was the scent of man—stale and weak, yet unmistakable. She sniffed the meat suspiciously, then drew back with a snarl, sneezing the scent from her nostrils, and began to back away. She had not forgotten that hateful taint; the memory of it would always remain—the taint of strychnine!

Vic began to circle round with mane on end, when—thud! The steel jaws of a fox-trap closed on her right forepaw, and as she leapt the horror of being held fell upon her in a frenzied, maddening fear.

But here the trapper's error came to light, for he had pegged the trap in place instead of attaching a drag, and Vic, dead to all pain, put forth the strength of a super-dog on the fierce, unyielding jaws. Had she been able to drag the trap

As Vic advanced there rose from the whiteness ahead a great grey, shadowy form, bearing upon its brow a pair of towering, upsweeping horns.

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a little way, she could not have freed herself; but, obtaining a direct pull, the jaws clicked together at her first fierce onslaught, and she bounded away nursing her wounded paw.

Had anything further been needed to seal Vic's fate, it occurred that very night, when a shepherd, returning late from a fair, crossed the lonely moor by the track that runs through the deserted mine. In the small hours he arrived at Windydoor, breathless with fear, to tell how a ghost-dog had followed him through the ruins, snarling a terrible threat, how it had followed him unseen across the ghostly stretch, sometimes at his very side, yet invisible in the darkness!

Thus it became established that the wild dog was a real source of danger to travellers on the moor, but to the shepherds Vic's conduct could mean but one thing—that she had puppies in the mine, and that ere long a whole pack of wild dogs would be loose among the flocks! Already there were lambs in the valleys; already Vic had been known to drag down a goat; and, if once she started on the flocks, a single week might devastate the range.

So the day came for the final rounding up of the wild dog of the Bennan Heights, and every shepherd and keeper of the hills, every boy and youth who could muster a firearm, was rallied to the chase. There came men from distant cities, young and old, a vast and cosmopolitan assembly of gunners and beaters, three hundred strong, to work the moor from brow to brow.

By the time the sun was well up, the men had arranged themselves roughly in a circle, the mine in the centre, and now steadily the circle closed with the noise of shouting and threshing of the ling. The mine was stormed by the beaters, but still no dog. Then suddenly a wild tally-ho went up, for Vic was sighted!

There on a distant ridge she stood in the centre of the ring of death, calmly taking in the situation with ears acock, but as they looked and the ring began to close she disappeared from view.

Slowly, cautiously, the circle drew—and met. Men looked blankly at one another. Not a shot had been fired. No one had seen the dog again. In some miraculous way she had slipped them!

Most of the men sat down, some produced flasks, and right in the middle of the chaos an urchin cried:

"There she is! There she is!"

Vic had risen from the heather about two hundred yards away, and now was fleeing like a ray of light across the tablelands. The army stumbled to its feet in hot pursuit, and automatically the young and able took the wings, till a vast, unbroken line followed in Vic's wake.

From the shadowy hollows Vic watched unseen but seeing. A dozen times she tried to double back, but at the brow of every hollow walked a gunner. Back, back they drove her, to the very moorland edge; then like a vice the line began to close, and in the jaws of that vice was Bennan Brow.

Vic reached the very goat track by which she had run but a few nights ago when she herself was the hunter, the track by which the hunted goats had evaded her that night of breathless freedom. Could she escape by the same open door now in the hour of her direst need? No, that was unthinkable. Yet to turn back was impossible; she must go on. She stole to the jutting tooth of rock that barred the way, and there, where the goats had stood, with empty space below, she crouched and hoped against hope they would not see her.

But the sunlight fell upon her coat as the gunners closed on either side, and there came a rattling volley and the deadly sting of shot. Vic rose, and for a moment stood undecided. She knew, as all wild creatures know when their hour comes, that only in desperate bravery lay her chance, and like the hunted hare that plunges into the foam, like the deer that goes to man to seek protection from the wolves, Vic turned, and from one foe she sought the mercy of the next.

Death! Death by shot and powder, or one she feared far less by Nature's generous hand, here in the wild scenes she had loved? Setting at nought her foes in the moment of their triumph, choosing her fate when fate was certain in a last mad bid for life, Vic rose, and over the edge she went, over and down into empty space.

The gunners high above stood and watched—watched like men of bronze with staring eyes. They saw the creature they had hunted deliberately hurl herself to her doom, saw her leaping downwards headlong from ledge to ledge, from pinnacle to pinnacle, falling, leaping, ricochetting in a deadly gamble with death—on a downward plunge which, now started, could not be checked till the very valley was reached.

A breathless hush had fallen upon the scene. The very wind ceased to sigh among the boulders. High above, a mere speck in the infinite, a buzzard hung on gliding wings, its call-notes wafting down in a thin-edged blade of sound.

And there, at length, in the valley far below, stood Vic, peering up at them with

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ears acock, nursing one paw from her encounter with the trap, yet safe and sound! It was grand, it was unbelievable, and many of the visitors drew their cartridges and flung them after her.

"Let her live! Let her live!" they cried; but that was impossible.

Doggedly, quietly, the shepherds renewed the chase, and Vic, wearily now, led them back to the deserted mine. Again the circle of death closed in, closed and met, and in the centre of it stood Vic, framed in the dark doorway of a crumbling hovel close by the furnace yard, with fangs exposed and mane erect, defying them to enter.

A dozen guns went up to shatter her lifeless on the threshold, when the hind from Windy-door leapt forth and stood before her with hands outspread.

"If you shoot her," he cried, "you'll shoot me first. She's my dog, and I'll keep her! Never a sheep has she killed as yet, and if she does it's at my door."

The guns were dropped, the men stood round waiting for something, they knew not what. At length one of them broke the awkward silence.

"What's she got in there, Ben?" he asked. "Is it her puppies?"

The hind did not know. "Come along and see," he answered simply.

But their eyes were upon Vic, who still stood snarling at the shepherd's side. Fearlessly he clutched her by the neck, and she fawned at his touch, as though she knew therein the hand of a friend.

"Come and see!" cried the hind. "It's there—there, somewhere in the dark."

And there in the gloom beyond they found all that remained of the man Vic had loved, the man to whose side she had returned now that she thought the end must be, the only living soul on all God's earth who had ever greeted her with fellowship and love.

Vic rose, and over the edge she went, over and down into empty space. . . . The gunners high above stood and watched.

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One Little Hour.

By Jean Fraser.

"You!" he said.

"You!" she said.

Around them flowed the never-ceasing stream of shoppers under the glow of the lamps of Oxford Street—eager faces peering wistfully through the plate glass at things their owners could never possess, discontented faces searching there whose owners could have anything they wanted and could never find out what it was.

"Lucia!" he said. "Well, this is rummy! I've hoped and hoped I might run against you some day. But lately I'd almost given it up."

She slid her hand into his arm.

"Oh, Reg, this is good!" she said. "Let's go somewhere; take me somewhere on a bus—to the Park."

It was dark under the trees, but the light of a lamp threw a beam like a star on to them.

"You haven't changed a bit," he said.

"In five years!" she laughed. "Oh yes, I have. But I'm clever with my face now. Before I never had to bother."

She made a little grimace again and then smiled.

"Five years since those dear old days!" he said. "Lucia, is it possible? Tell me everything about yourself."

"You tell me first. What did you do afterwards, Reg?"

He was silent a minute. Then:

"After you chucked me I wished I might die. But I didn't. I went on at the studio just as usual, dear, with all the old crowd. They were jolly decent. You'd chucked every one of them in turn, I think. So they understood."

"Derrick, and Arthur, and Ranulf, and David," she said softly. "Oh, Reg, what fun it was to be young!"

"And Podger," he reminded her. "Don't forget Podger. But you never did get on with him. He wasn't—well, he wasn't the right stuff, was he, old Podger?"

"He meant well," she said wistfully.

"He's disappeared. So's David, so's Derrick. The world's so large, it's like losing a watch in a turnip field. And Ranulf and Arthur are married. There's only me."

"And you, Reg?" she asked.

"You needn't ask if I am married," he said huskily, his hand closing over hers in the darkness. "And as for the rest, I just go on, always seeing ahead the success I can never grasp—always watching other people's prosperity from the top of a bus."

"It looks much best from there," she whispered. "Oh, if life were as nice as it looked from the top of a bus!"

"In the old days it was fun to be hungry and romantic to be poor," "but now it's just part of the routine."

"Oh, Reg," she said, "you don't have to——"

"Sometimes," he mused, "but not so often since I took to designing wallpapers—large lilies on opaque grounds, and the sort of pattern you see when you first open your eyes the morning after the night before. That's the way to make money. That's the sort of thing the rich like to pay for nowadays. My most successful design was suggested by seeing the place where a tramcar had run over a dog."

She shuddered.

"And you still live——?"

"Same old studio. Same old cracked plates. Same old cracked bust of Venus on the mantelshelf."

"I can see it all," she said. "Yet it was all very jolly, wasn't it, when we were young and poor?"

He turned and looked at her, and her furs, and her little, close-fitting hat, and her air of prosperity, that contrasted so oddly with his shabby suit, and crushed hat, his boots through which some sock would have showed at the cracks with the slightest encouragement.

"You were always like a Fairy-Tale Princess," he said. "You always seemed jolly and successful, and you always seemed

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like a fashion-plate, even when no one would buy your pictures. How did you do it, dear?"

"I think it was pretence," she said. "I always pretended I was rich and happy, so you always thought I was. But I used to cry sometimes at night—especially when I could not make up my mind about marrying. I loved you all."

"Except Podger," he interrupted. "Poor old Podger!"

"Afterwards," she said, "I stopped painting pictures, and made them. I went to a film place. At first it was hard and horrible—for as long as I tried to do the pretty parts. And then one day I took to the funny ones, and now——"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"They'll give me what I ask," she explained. "And I don't work unless I feel like it."

There was silence.

"Life's funny," she went on. "I was about the only one of our little clique who didn't deserve success. And I was the only one who got it."

"And Podger. Some seventh cousin twice removed left Podger tons of cash, I heard. He may be in Town, for all I know, but he's dropped all his old pals. He was like that."

"Stout people are usually selfish," she said. "They stick out so everywhere that they can't see beyond themselves."

"Come back and have tea there," he begged suddenly. "There is the same old teapot with the broken spout."

She looked at him suddenly.

"Oh, Reg, how I should love to!" she said, looking down at her little diamond-studded watch. "Perhaps just for an hour——"

"Let's go back and be young again," he whispered. "Just for an hour."

"You won't——?" she hesitated.

"No, dear," he said firmly. "I've given up dreams of that kind."

And so to Chelsea, through a little evening fog. Tired women nodded over baskets full of violas tied up tight to look like violets; shop windows glittered with lights turned inwards on to pieces of glass cut so as to look like diamonds; honest women shivered in the cold wind in thin silk stockings, so as to look like ladies.

"Let's stop at the corner and buy some muffins," she said, "like we used to do in the old days."

"It was here we got off the bus that first night, after you'd promised to marry me," he mused. "I was so giddy with happiness that I couldn't remember which turning it was."

They turned into the old stone doorway.

"It looks cleaner than it used to," she said.

"We'll go up in the dark, and continue the illusion."

"Oh!" she cried, "nothing has changed. Except the curtains, Reg. They are very nice curtains. But I think I preferred the old ones best. Poke the fire, and I will toast the muffins. We are five years ago, Reg. I am twenty-two and you are twenty-four, and we are quite un-sensible and not at all practical, and——"

"And in love," he said gently, laying out the two cracked cups and the brown teapot that had lost the end of its spout.

He sat on the divan behind her, and watched her making the toast, the firelight on her face and hair.

"Isn't it like old times?" she laughed.

"Isn't it? Just the same, only different."

They had tea in the soft firelight, and then she washed the cups at the tap outside the door, where he washed his brushes. She looked at her watch.

"It's time," she whispered.

He nodded.

"I've been lying to you, Lucia," he said huskily, "but now I've got to tell you. When you chucked me, dear, I think I nearly died. I know I wished I might. And then——"

He led her to the door.

"I saw the sense of it. Romance, you said, won't pay the coal bills, and I knew you were right. And Art wouldn't pay them either, and so——"

He laughed.

"Wallpapers did," he ended.

He switched a light on in the darkened house, and she saw it had all been re-painted. Soft shaded lights hung there, and the carpet on the stairs, and the oak furniture, looked solid and good.

A woman's voice was singing softly upstairs, and he took Lucia's hand.

"She never comes to the studio," he said. "I lied to you lots. We were married two years ago. She's awfully good to me. When I began to do well I knew it would have to happen sooner or later. And it was all very sensible and practical. We are good pals."

He looked at her wistfully.

"I wonder if you understand?"

She nodded.

"I didn't want to tell you—it would have broken the spell—till we'd had one little hour of the past. She knows all about it."

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He opened a door, and a girl in white rose from the piano. She was gentle, and fluffy, and pretty, and she greeted Lucia like some shy schoolgirl.

"I've heard of you," she said, looking at Reginald, and half laughing. "He's told me lots about those days."

They made polite conversation for a little while, and then Lucia turned to go.

"You'll come again?" the girl asked, and she nodded, knowing well she never would.

In silence they went down the dark staircase together. She opened the studio door a moment.

"Good-bye, old room," she whispered.

"Life's funny," he said sadly.

She held out her hand.

"Good-bye, dear. It was fun going back to-day."

"Forgive my lies," he said. "I wanted to pretend a little while even to myself. And that would have spoilt it."

She nodded.

"It would have spoilt everything," she echoed. "That was why I didn't tell you either, Reg."

"Tell me what?" he asked eagerly. "Are you——"

"Yes," she said. "I'm Mrs. Podger."

And then she was gone. The mist swallowed her. In the gardens opposite dead leaves were falling softly.

Upstairs the girl at the piano was singing. He caught the words of her song:

"One little hour of happiness divine,
But could you stand again where once you stood
And ask me if for you I'd live again
That little hour—I would!"

CELEBRATION.

Some men there are who feel, as soon as Spring
With all its varied pageantry is here,
An irresistible desire to sing
(And do it heedless of the critic's sneer).
Not such am I! Such conduct I eschew
And greet the season in my special way.
The birds are singing and the skies are blue—
I think I'll roll the tennis lawn to-day.

And there are those whose fancies lightly turn
To thoughts of love, whose hearts are in a whirl,
Who long to pour out ardent words that burn
(And go and do so to the nearest girl).
But I am seized with no desire to ask
For Amaryllis' smile to make me gay;
Mine is the calmer choice, the nobler task—
I think I'll roll the tennis court to-day.

Each shows how much the season makes him brisk,
Choosing the mode most suited to his taste;
The lambkin, for example, loves to frisk
(But lambkins are not fifty round the waist).
With song of thrush the garden's all athrob,
House-hunting cuckoos search for where to lay,
And I, since no one else will do the job,
I think I'll roll the tennis lawn to-day.

T. H.

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(Continued from page 361.)

"Were you married to Father when he was alive?" asked Jon suddenly.

"No, dear; he died in '92—very old—eighty-four, I think."

"Is Father like him?"

"A little, but more subtle, and not quite so solid."

"I know from Grandfather's portrait; who painted that?"

"One of June's 'lame ducks.' But it's quite good."

Jon slipped his hand through his mother's arm. "Tell me about the family quarrel, Mum."

He felt her arm quivering. "No, dear; that's for your father some day, if he thinks fit."

"Then it *was* serious," said Jon, with a catch in his breath.

"Yes." And there was a silence, during which neither knew whether the arm or the hand within it was quivering most.

"Some people," said Irene softly, "think the moon on her back is evil; to me she's always lovely. Look at those cypress shadows! Jon, Father says we may go to Italy, you and I, for two months. Would you like?"

Jon took his hand from under her arm; his sensation was so sharp and so confused. Italy with his mother! A fortnight ago it would have been perfection; now it filled him with dismay. Feeling this sudden suggestion had to do with Fleur, he stammered out:

"Oh, yes! only—I don't know. Ought I—now I've just begun? I'd like to think it over."

Her voice answered, cool and gentle:

"Yes, dear; think it over. But better now than when you've begun farming seriously. Italy with you—! It would be nice!"

Jon put his arm round her waist, still slim and firm as a girl's.

"Do you think you ought to leave Father?" he said feebly, feeling very mean.

"Father suggested it; he thinks you ought to see Italy at least before you settle down to anything."

The sense of meanness died in Jon; he knew, yes—he knew—that his father and his mother were not speaking frankly, no more than he himself. They wanted to keep him from Fleur! His heart hardened. And as if she felt that process going on, his mother said:

"Good-night, dear! Have a good sleep and think it over. But it would be lovely!"

She pressed him to her so quickly that he did not see her face. Jon stood feeling exactly as he used to when he was a naughty little boy; sore because he was not loving, and because he was justified in his own eyes.

But Irene, after she had stood a moment in her own room, passed through the dressing-room between it and her husband's.

"Well?"

"He will think it over, Jolyon."

Watching her lips that wore a little drawn smile, Jolyon said quietly:

"You had better let me tell him, and have done with it. After all, Jon has the instincts of a gentleman. He has only to understand——"

"Only! He can't understand; that's impossible."

"I believe I could have at his age."

Irene caught his hand. "You were always more of a realist than Jon; and never so innocent."

"That's true," said Jolyon. "It's queer, isn't it? You and I would tell our stories to the world without a particle of shame; but our own boy stumps us."

"We've never cared whether the world approves or not."

"Jon would not disapprove of *us!*"

"Oh! Jolyon, yes. He's in love, I feel he's in love. And he'd say: 'My mother once married *without love!* How could she have!' It'll seem to him a crime! And so it was!"

Jolyon took her hand, and said with a wry smile:

"Ah! why on earth are we born young? Now, if only we were born old and grew younger year by year we should understand how things happen, and drop all our cursed intolerance. But you know if the boy is really in love, he won't forget, even if he goes to Italy. We're a tenacious breed; and he'll know by instinct why he's being sent. Nothing will really cure him, but the shock of being told."

"Let me try, anyway."

Jolyon stood a moment without speaking. Between this devil and the deep sea—the pain of a dreaded disclosure and the grief of losing his wife for two months—he secretly hoped for the devil; yet if she wished for the deep sea he must put up with it. After all, it would be training for that departure from which there would be no return. And taking her in his arms, he kissed her eyes, and said:

"As you will, my love."

XI.

DUET.

That "small" emotion love, grows amazingly when threatened with extinction. Jon reached

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Paddington station half-an-hour before his time and a full week after, as it seemed to him. He stood at the appointed bookstall amid a crowd of Sunday travellers, in a Harris tweed suit exhaling, as it were, the emotion of his thumping heart. He read the names of the novels on the bookstall, and bought one at last, to avoid being regarded with suspicion by the bookstall clerk. It was called "The Heart of the Trail!" which must mean something though it did not seem to. He also bought the *Lady's Mirror* and the *Landsman*. Every minute was an hour long, and full of horrid imaginings. After nineteen had passed, he saw her with a bag and a porter wheeling her luggage. She came swiftly; she came cool. She greeted him as if he were a brother.

"First-class," she said to the porter, "corner seats; opposite."

Jon admired her frightful self-possession.

"Can't we get a carriage to ourselves?" he whispered.

"No good; it's a stopping train. After Maidenhead perhaps. Look natural, Jon."

Jon screwed his features into a scowl. They got in—with two other beasts!—oh! heaven! He tipped the porter unnaturally in his confusion. The brute deserved nothing for putting them in there, and looking as if he knew all about it into the bargain.

Fleur hid herself behind the *Lady's Mirror*. Jon imitated her behind the *Landsman*. The train started. Fleur let the *Lady's Mirror* fall and leaned forward.

"Well?" she said.

"It's seemed about fifteen days."

She nodded, and Jon's face lighted up at once.

"Look natural," murmured Fleur, and went off into a bubble of laughter. It hurt him. How could he look natural with Italy hanging over him? He had meant to break it to her gently, but now he blurted out:

"They want me to go to Italy with Mother for two months."

Fleur drooped her eyelids, turned a little pale, and bit her lips.

"Oh!" she said. It was all, but it was much.

That "Oh!" was like the quick drawing back of the wrist in fencing ready for parry and riposte. The parry came:

"You must go!"

"Go?" said Jon in a strangled voice.

"Of course."

"But—two months—it's ghastly."

"No," said Fleur; "six weeks. You'll have forgotten me by then. We'll meet in the National Gallery the day after you get back."

Jon laughed.

"But suppose you've forgotten *me?*" he muttered into the noise of the train.

Fleur shook her head.

"Some other beast——" murmured Jon.

Her foot touched his.

"No other beast," she said, lifting the *Lady's Mirror*.

The train stopped; two passengers got out and one got in.

"I shall die," thought Jon, "if we're not alone at all."

The train went on, and again Fleur leaned forward.

"I never let go," she said; "do you?"

Jon shook his head vehemently.

"Never!" he said. "Will you write to me?"

"No; but *you* can—to my club."

She had a club; she was wonderful!

"Did you pump Holly?" he muttered.

"Yes; but I got nothing. I didn't dare pump hard."

"What can it be?" cried Jon.

"I shall find out all right."

A long silence followed till Fleur said: "This is Maidenhead; stand by, Jon."

The train stopped. The remaining passenger got out. Fleur drew down her blind.

"Quick!" she cried. "Hang out! Look as much of a beast as you can."

Jon blew his nose and scowled furiously; never in all his life had he scowled like that! An old lady recoiled, a young one tried the handle. It turned, but the door would not open. The train moved; the young lady darted to another carriage.

"What luck!" cried Jon. "It jammed."

"Yes," said Fleur; "I was holding it."

The train moved out, and Jon fell on his knees.

"Look out for the corridor," she whispered, "and—quick!"

Her lips met his. And though their kiss only lasted perhaps ten seconds, Jon's soul left his body and went so far beyond, that when he was again sitting opposite that demure figure he was pale as death. He heard her sigh, and the sound seemed to him the most precious he had ever heard—an exquisite declaration that he meant something to her.

"Six weeks isn't really long," she said; "and you can easily make it six, if you keep your head out there and never seem to think of me."

Jon gasped.

"This is just what's really wanted, Jon, to convince them, don't you see? If we're just as bad when you come back, they'll stop

["TO LET" *continued overleaf*.]

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being ridiculous about it. Only, I'm sorry it's not Spain. There's a girl in a Goya picture at Madrid who's like me, Father says. Only she isn't—we've got a copy of her."

It was to Jon like a ray of sunshine piercing through a fog. "I'll make it Spain," he said. "Mother won't mind; she's never been there. And my father thinks a lot of Goya."

"Oh, yes; he's a painter, isn't he?"

"Only water colour," said Jon, with honesty.

"When we come to Reading, Jon, get out first and go down to Caversham lock and wait for me. I'll send the car home and we'll walk by the towing-path."

Jon seized her hand in gratitude, and they sat silent, with the world well lost, and one eye on the corridor. But the train seemed to run twice as fast now, and its sound was almost lost in that of Jon's sighing.

"We're getting near," said Fleur; "the towing-path's awfully exposed. Once more! Oh! Jon, don't forget me."

Jon answered with his kiss. And very soon a flushed, distracted-looking youth could have been seen—as they say—leaping from the train and hurrying along the platform, searching his pockets for his ticket.

When at last she rejoined him on the towing-path a little beyond Caversham Lock he made an effort, and regained some measure of equanimity. If they had to part, he would not make a scene. A breeze by the bright river threw the white side of the willow-leaves up into the sunlight, and followed those two with its faint rustle.

"I told our chauffeur that I was tra-ngiddy," said Fleur. "Did you look pretty natural as you went out?"

"I don't know. What is natural?"

"It's natural to you to look seriously happy. When I first saw you I thought you weren't a bit like other people."

"Exactly what I thought when I saw you. I knew at once I should never love anybody else."

Fleur laughed.

"We're absurdly young. And love's young dream's out of date, Jon. Besides, it's awfully expensive. Think of all the fun you might have. You haven't begun, even; it's a shame, really. And there's me. I wonder!"

Confession came on Jon's spirit. How could she say such things just as they were going to part?

"If you feel like that," he said, "I can't go. I shall tell Mother that I ought to try and work. There's always the condition of the world!"

"The condition of the world!"

Jon thrust his hands deep into his pockets.

"But there is," he said; "think of the people starving!"

Fleur shook her head. "No, no, I never, never will make myself miserable for nothing."

"Nothing! But there's an awful state of things, and, of course, one ought to help."

"Oh! yes, I know all that. But you can't help people, Jon; they're hopeless. When you pull them out they only get into another hole. Look at them, still fighting and plotting and struggling, though they're dying in heaps all the time. Idiots!"

"Aren't you sorry for them?"

"Oh! sorry—yes, but I'm not going to make myself unhappy about it; that's no good."

And they were silent, disturbed by this first glimpse of each other's natures.

"I think people are brutes and idiots," said Fleur stubbornly.

"I think they're poor wretches," said Jon. It was as if they had quarrelled—and at this supreme and awful moment, with parting visible out there in that last gap of the willows!

"Well, go and help your poor wretches, and don't think of me."

Jon stood still. Sweat broke out on his forehead, and his lips trembled. Fleur, too, had stopped, and was frowning at the river.

"I *must* believe in things," said Jon with a sort of agony; "we're all meant to enjoy life."

Fleur laughed. "Yes; and that's what you won't do, if you don't take care. But perhaps your idea of enjoyment is to make yourself wretched. There are lots of people like that, of course."

She was pale, her eyes had darkened, her lips had thinned. Was it Fleur thus staring at the water? Jon had an unreal feeling as if he were passing through the scene in a book where the lover has to choose between love and duty. But just then she looked round at him. Never was anything so intoxicating as that vivacious look. It acted on him exactly as the tug of a chain acts on a dog—brought him up to her with his tail wagging and his tongue out.

"Don't let's be silly," she said, "time's too short. Look, Jon, you can just see where I've got to cross the river. There, round the bend, where the woods begin."

Jon saw a gable, a chimney or two, a patch of wall through the trees, and felt his heart sink.

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"I mustn't dawdle any more. It's no good going beyond the next hedge, it gets all open. Let's get on to it and say good-bye."

They went side by side, hand in hand, silently towards the hedge, where the may-flower, both pink and white, was in full bloom.

"My club's the 'Talisman,' Stratton Street, Piccadilly. Letters there will be quite safe, and I'm almost always up once a week."

Jon nodded. His face had become extremely set, his eyes stared straight before him.

"To-day's the twenty-third of May," said Fleur; "on the ninth of July I shall be in front of the 'Bacchus and Ariadne' at three o'clock; will you?"

"I will."

"If you feel as bad as I it's all right. Let those people pass!"

A man and woman airing their children went by strung out in Sunday fashion.

The last of them passed the wicket gate.

"Domesticity!" said Fleur, and blotted herself against the hawthorn hedge. The blossom sprayed out above her head, and one pink cluster brushed her cheek. Jon put up his hand jealously to keep it off.

"Good-bye, Jon." For a second they stood with hands hard clasped. Then their lips met for the third time, and when they parted Fleur broke away and fled through the wicket gate. Jon stood where she had left him, with his forehead against that pink cluster. Gone! For an eternity—for seven weeks all but two days! And here he was, wasting the last sight of her! He rushed to the gate. She was walking swiftly on the heels of the straggling children. She turned her head, he saw her hand make a little flitting gesture; then she sped on, and the trailing family blotted her out from his view.

The words of a comic song:

"Paddington groan, worst ever known,
He gave a sepulchral Padding on groan"

came into his head, and he sped incontinently back to Reading Station. All the way up to London and down to Wansdon he sat with "The Heart of the Trail" open on his knee, knitting in his head a poem so full of feeling that it would not rhyme.

XII.

CAPRICE.

Fleur sped on. She had need of rapid motion; she was late, and wanted all her wits about her when she got in. She passed the islands, the station, and hotel, and was about to take the ferry, when she saw a skiff with a young man standing up in it, and holding to the bushes.

"Miss Forsyte," he said; "let me put you across. I've come on purpose."

She looked at him in blank amazement.

"It's all right, I've been having tea with your people. I thought I'd save you the last bit. It's on my way, I'm just off back to Pangbourne. My name's Mont. I saw you at the picture gallery—you remember—when your father invited me to see his pictures."

"Oh!" said Fleur; "yes—the handkerchief."

To this young man she owed Jon; and, taking his hand, she stepped down into the skiff. Fresh from emotion, and a little out of breath, she sat silent; not so, the young man. She had never heard anyone say so much in so short a time. He told her his age, twenty-four; his weight, ten stone eleven; his place of residence, not far away; described his sensations under fire, and what it felt like to be gassed; criticised the Juno, mentioned his own conception of that goddess; commented on the Goya copy; said Fleur was not too awfully like it; sketched in rapidly the condition of England; spoke of Monsieur Profond—or whatever his name was — as an awful sport; thought her father had some ripping pictures and some rather "dug-up"; hoped he might row down again and take her on the river because he was quite trustworthy; inquired her opinion of Tchekov, gave her his own; wished they could go to the Russian ballet together some time—considered the name Fleur Forsyte simply ripping; cursed his people for giving him the name of Michael when his name was Mont; outlined his father, and said that if she wanted a good book she should read "Job"; his father was rather like Job while Job still had land.

"But Job didn't have land," Fleur murmured; "he only had flocks and herds and moved on."

"Ah!" answered Michael Mont, "I wish my Gov'nor would move on. Not that I want his land. Land's an awful bore in these days, don't you think?"

"We never have it in my family," said Fleur. "We have everything else. I believe one of my great uncles once had a sentimental farm in Dorset, because we came from there originally, but it cost him more than it made him happy."

"Did he sell it?"

"No; he kept it."

"Why?"

"Because nobody would buy it."

"Good for the old boy!"

("*TO LET*" *continued overleaf.*)

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"No," said Fleur, "it wasn't good for him. Father says it soured him. His name was Swithin."

"How perfectly topping!"

"Do you know," said Fleur, "that we're getting farther off, not nearer? This river flows."

"Splendid!" cried Mont, dipping his sculls vaguely; "it's good to meet a girl who's got wit."

"But better to meet a young man who's got it in the plural," answered Fleur.

Young Mont raised a hand to tear his hair.

"Look out!" cried Fleur. "Your scull!"

"All right! It's thick enough to bear a scratch!"

"Do you mind sculling?" said Fleur severely. "I want to get in."

"Ah!" said Mont; "but when you get in, you see, I shan't see you any more to-day. *Fini*, as the French girl said when she jumped on her bed after saying her prayers. Don't you bless the day that gave you a French mother, and a name like yours?"

"I like my name, but Father gave it me. Mother wanted me called Marguerite."

"Which is absurd. Do you mind calling me M.M. and letting me call you F.F.? It's in the spirit of the age."

"I don't mind anything, so long as I get in."

Mont caught a little crab, and answered: "That was a nasty one!"

"Please row,' said Fleur.

"I am," and he did for several strokes, looking at her with rueful eagerness. "Of course, you know," he ejaculated, pausing, "that I come to see *you*, not your Father's pictures."

Fleur rose.

"If you don't row I shall get out and swim."

"Really and truly? Then I could come in after you."

"Mr. Mont," said Fleur severely, "I'm late and tired; please put me on shore at once."

When she stepped out on to the garden landing stage, he rose, and grasping his hair with both hands, looked at her.

Fleur smiled.

"Don't!" cried the irrepressible Mont. "I know you're going to say: 'Out, damned hair!'"

Fleur whisked round, threw him a wave of her hand. "Good-bye, Mr. M.M.!" she called, and was gone among the rose trees. She looked at her wrist watch, and the windows of the house. It struck her as curiously uninhabited. Past six! The pigeons were just gathering to roost, and sunlight slanted on the dovecot, on their snowy feathers, and beyond in a shower on the top boughs of the woods. The click of billiard balls came from the inglenook—Jack Cardigan no doubt; a faint rustling too, from a eucalyptus tree, startling Southerner in this old English garden. She reached the veranda, and she was passing in, but stopped at the sound of voices from the drawing room to the left. Her mother? Prosper Profond? From behind the veranda screen which fenced the inglenook she heard these words!

"I don'd, Annette."

Annette! Did Father know that he called her mother "Annette"? Always on the side of her father—as children are ever on one side or the other in houses where relations are a little strained—she stood, uncertain. Her mother was speaking in her low, pleasing, slightly metallic voice—one word she caught: "*Demain*." And Profond's answer: "All right." Fleur frowned. A little sound came out into the stillness. Then Profond's voice: "I'm takin' a small stroll."

Fleur darted through the window into the morning room. There he came from the drawing room, crossing the veranda, down the lawn; the click of billiard balls which, in listening for other sounds, she had ceased to hear, began again. She shook herself, passed into the hall, and opened the drawing room door. Her mother was sitting on the sofa between the windows, her knees crossed, her head resting on a cushion, her lips half parted, her eyes half closed. She looked extraordinarily handsome.

"Ah! Here you are, Fleur! Your Father is beginning to fuss."

"Where is he?"

"In the picture gallery. Go up!"

"What are you going to do to-morrow, Mother"

"To-morrow? I go up to London with your Aunt. Why?"

"I thought you might be. Will you get me a quite plain parasol?"

"What colour?"

"Green. They're all going back, I suppose."

"Yes, all; you will console your Father. Kiss me, then."

Fleur crossed the room, stooped, received a kiss on her forehead, and went out past the impress of a form on the sofa cushions in the other corner. She ran upstairs.

Fleur was by no means the old-fashioned daughter who demands the regulation of her parents' lives in accordance with the standard imposed upon herself. She claimed to regulate her own life, not those of others;

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besides, an unerring instinct for what was likely to advantage her own case was already at work. In a disturbed domestic atmosphere the heart she had set on Jon would have a better chance. None the less was she offended, as a flower by a crisping wind. If that man had really been kissing her mother it was—serious, and Father ought to know. "*Demain*!" "All righd!" And her mother going up to Town! She turned into her bedroom and hung out of the window to cool her face which had suddenly grown very hot. Jon must be at the station by now! What did her father know about Jon? Probably everything—pretty nearly!

She changed her dress, so as to look as if she had been in some time, and ran up to the gallery.

Soames was standing stubbornly still before his Alfred Stevens—the picture he loved best. He did not turn at the sound of the door, but she knew he had heard, and she knew he was hurt. She came up softly behind him, put her arms round his neck, and poked her face over his shoulder, till her cheek lay against his. It was an advance which had never yet failed, but it failed her now, and she augured the worst.

"Well," he said stonily, "so you've come!"

"Is that all," murmured Fleur, "from a bad parent?" And rubbed her cheek against his.

Soames shook his head as far as that was possible.

"Why do you keep me on tenterhooks like this, putting me off and off?"

"Darling," said Fleur, "it is very harmless."

"Harmless!" said Soames. "Much you know what's harmless and what isn't."

Fleur dropped her arms, and answered.

"Well, then, dear, suppose you tell me; and be quite frank about it."

And she went over to the window seat.

Her father had turned from his picture, and was staring at his feet. He looked very grey. "He has nice small feet," she thought, catching his eye, at once averted from her.

"You're my only comfort," said Soames suddenly, "and you go on like this."

Fleur's heart began to beat.

"Like what, dear?"

Again Soames gave her a look which, but for the affection in it, might have been called furtive.

"You know what I told you," he said. "I don't choose to have anything to do with that branch of our family."

"Yes, ducky, but I don't know why *I* shouldn't."

Soames turned on his heel.

"I'm not going into the reasons," he said; "you ought to trust me, Fleur!"

The way he spoke those words affected Fleur, but she thought of Jon, and was silent, tapping her foot against the wainscot. Unconsciously she had assumed a modern attitude, with one leg twisted in and out of the other, with her chin on one bent wrist, her other arm across her chest, and its hand hugging her elbow; there was not a line of her that was not involuted, and yet—in spite of all—she retained a certain grace.

"You know my wishes," Soames went on, "and yet you stayed on there four days. And I suppose that boy came with you today."

Fleur kept her eyes on him.

"I don't ask you anything," said Soames; "I make no inquisition where you're concerned."

Fleur suddenly stood up, leaning out at the window with her chin on her hands. The sun had sunk behind trees, the pigeons were perched, quite still, on the edge of the dovecot; the click of the billiard balls mounted, and a faint radiance shone out below where Jack Cardigan had turned the light up.

"Will it make you any happier," she said suddenly, "if I promise you not to see him for, say, the next six weeks?" She was not prepared for a sort of tremble in the blankness of his voice.

"Six weeks? Six years—sixty years more like it. Don't delude yourself, Fleur, don't delude yourself!"

Fleur turned in alarm.

"Father, what is it?"

"Don't tell me that you're foolish enough to have any feeling beyond caprice. That would be too much!" And he laughed.

Fleur, who had never heard him laugh like that, thought: "Then it *is* deep! Oh! what is it?" And putting her hand through his arm, she said lightly:

"No, of course; caprice. Only, I like my caprices and I don't like yours, dear."

"Mine!" said Soames bitterly, and turned away.

The light outside had chilled, and threw a chalky whiteness on the river. The trees had lost all gaiety of colour. She felt a sudden hunger for Jon's face, for his hands, and the feel of his lips again on hers. And pressing her arms tight across her breast she forced out a little light laugh,

"*Oh, la! la!* What a small fuss! as Profond would say. Father, I don't like that man."

["TO LET" *continued overleaf.*]

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She saw him stop, and take something out of his breast pocket.

"You don't?" he said. "Why!"

"Nothing," murmured Fleur; "just caprice!"

"No," said Soames; "not caprice!" And he tore what was in his hands across. "You're right. *I* don't like him either."

"Look!" said Fleur softly. "There he goes! I hate his shoes; they don't make any noise."

Down in the failing light Prosper Profond moved, his hands in his side pockets, whistling softly in his beard; he stopped, and glanced up at the sky, as if saying: "I don'd think much of that small moon."

Fleur drew back. "Isn't he a great cat?" she whispered; and the sharp click of the billiard balls rose, as if Jack Cardigan had capped the cat, the moon, caprice and tragedy with "In off the red!"

Monsieur Profond had resumed his strolling, to a teasing little tune in his beard. What was it? Oh! yes, from "Rigoletto": "*Donna e mobile.*" Just what he would think! She squeezed her father's arm.

"Prowling!" she muttered, as he turned the corner of the house. It was past that disillusioned moment which divides the day and night—still and lingering and warm, with may scent and lilac scent clinging on the riverside air. A blackbird suddenly burst out. Jon would be in London by now; in the Park perhaps, crossing the Serpentine, thinking of her! A little sound beside her made her turn her eyes; her father was again tearing the paper in his hands. Fleur saw it was a cheque.

"I shan't sell him my Gauguin," he said. "I don't know what your Aunt and Imogen see in him."

"Or Mother."

"Your Mother!" said Soames.

"Poor Father!" she thought. "He never looks happy—not really happy. I don't want to make him worse, but of course I shall have to, when Jon comes back. Oh! well, sufficient unto the night!"

"I'm going to dress," she said.

In her room she had a fancy to put on her "freak" dress. It was of gold tissue with little trousers of the same, tightly drawn in at the ankles, a page's cape slung from the shoulders, little gold shoes, and a gold-winged Mercury helmet; and all over her were tiny gold bells, especially on the helmet; so that if she shook her head she pealed. When she was dressed she felt quite sick because Jon could not see her; it even seemed a pity that the sprightly young man Michael Mont would not have a view. But the gong had sounded, and she went down.

She made a sensation in the drawing room. Winifred thought it "Most amusing." Imogen was enraptured. Jack Cardigan called it "stunning," "ripping," "topping" and "corking." Monsieur Profond, smiling with his eyes, said: "Thad's a nice small dress!" Her mother, very handsome in black, sat looking at her, and said nothing. It remained for her father to apply the test of common sense. "What did you put on that thing for; you're not going to dance?"

Fleur spun round, and the bells pealed.

"Caprice!"

Soames stared at her, and, turning away, gave his arm to Winifred. Jack Cardigan took her mother. Prosper Profond took Imogen. Fleur went in by herself, with her bells jingling.

The "small" moon had soon dropped down, and May night had fallen soft and warm, enwrapping with its grape-bloom colour and its scents the billion caprices, intrigues, passions, longings, and regrets of men and women. Happy was Jack Cardigan, who snored into Imogen's white shoulder, fit as a flea; or Timothy in his "mausoleum" too old for anything but baby's slumber. For so many lay awake, or dreamed, teased by the cross-cross of the world.

The dew fell and the flowers closed; cattle grazed on in the river meadows, feeling with their tongues for the grass they could not see; and the sheep on the downs lay quiet as stones. Pheasants in the tall trees of the Pangbourne woods, larks on their grassy nests above the gravel pit at Wansdon, swallows in the eaves at Robin Hill, and the sparrows of Mayfair, all made a dreamless night of it, soothed by the lack of wind. The Mayfly filly, hardly accustomed to her new quarters, scraped at her straw a little; and the few night-flitting things—bats, moths, owls, were vigorous in the warm darkness; but the peace of the night lay in the brain of all day-time nature, colourless and still. Men and women, alone, riding the hobby-horses of anxiety or love, burned their wavering tapers of dream and thought into the lonely hours.

Fleur, leaning out of her window, heard the hall clock's muffled chime of twelve, the tiny splash of a fish, the sudden shaking of an aspen's leaves in the puffs of breeze that rose along the river, the distant rumble of a night train, and time and again the sounds which none can put a name to in the darkness, soft obscure expressions of uncatalogued emotions from man and beast, bird and machine, or, maybe, from departed

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Forsytes, Darties, Cardigans, taking strolls back into a world which had once suited their disembodied spirits. But Fleur heeded not these sounds, her spirit, far from disembodied, fled with swift wing from railway carriage to flowery hedge, straining after Jon, tenacious of his forbidden image, and the sound of his voice which was taboo. And she crinkled her nose, retrieving from the perfume of the riverside night that moment when his hand slipped between the may-flowers and her cheek. Long she leaned out in her freak dress, keen to burn her wings at life's candle; while the moths brushed her cheeks on their pilgrimage to the lamp on her dressing table, ignorant that in a Forsyte's house there is no open flame. But at last even she felt sleepy, and, forgetting her bells, drew quickly in.

Through the open window of his room, alongside Annette's, Soames, wakeful too, heard their thin faint tinkle, as it might be shaken from stars, or the dewdrops falling from a flower, if one could hear such sounds.

"Caprice!" he thought. "I can't tell. She's wilful. What shall I do? Fleur!"

And long into the "small" night he brooded.

In spite of her father's anxiety at her growing passion for Jon, Fleur is quite undaunted. The suspicion of an intrigue between her mother and Prosper Profond appears to her in the light of a possible advantage, since a disturbed domestic atmosphere might mean more sympathy for her and Jon. How Jon returns from Spain to find Fleur hot on the scent of an explanation of the family feud is related in the April instalment.

BALLADE OF A BUTTERFLY.

While supermen are tied in Town
  Manipulating stock and share
(Their brows are furrowed by a frown
  When Bulls won't "bull," or Bears won't "bear"!),
  Without a cent, without a care,
I laze beneath the open sky,
  Feasting on Nature's bounties rare—
A weary, wind-blown butterfly.

My hat is horrible—the crown
  Would drive a Brummel to despair;
And yet I'd rather die a clown
  Than live a harassed millionaire.
  Riches! Alas, I have no *flair*
For money-making . . . let me lie
  On scented heather, resting there
A weary, wind-blown butterfly.

My skin is clear and rough and brown;
  What I desire to do I dare.
Away with fleeting fame, renown—
  Give me the Road, far-stretching, fair!
  I do not want fine clothes to wear,
Or palaces; I do not cry
  For gold, who to the World am heir—
A weary, wind-blown butterfly.

Princess, Love baits the hidden snare . . .
  Ah! Smile, and do not waste a sigh
On one who has no lot to share—
  A weary, wind-blown butterfly!

E. L. Roberts.

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Mr. Editor—His Page.

18, *Henrietta Street,*
London, W.C. 2,
February 12th, 1921.

So Tired!

This seems to be a tired land where writers are concerned. When the angel with his darker draught draws up to the tried and valiant old guard of celebrities, I really don't know what we shall do, because there is no sign of their successors. Mr. A., and Mr. B., and Mr. C., who delighted our parents in their youth are still in harness. No one has arisen to fling them from their well-worn pedestals. No one seems to have the capacity.

Whether it's the climate or war-exhaustion or decay of national imagination I don't know, but young writers full of enthusiasm do not come forward. What we look for is people interested in life or a phase of life, and we don't find them. Enthusiasm is the outstanding necessity. A man can write interestingly about sawdust if he feels enthusiastic on the subject. But enthusiasm grows fine by degrees and beautifully less. Beginners are unwilling from lack of it to slave patiently until they acquire a respectable technique.

No one was born a great writer. These great ones had to make perfect, through practice, their latent gift. But if one never begins or perseveres, how can one prevail? The requirements for success are to have something to tell and tell it with enthusiasm. Editors are only too anxious to help the promising beginner with advice, encouragement, even money. May some of the seed I have sown in these paragraphs light on fruitful soil!

Something New.

Mr. Gilbert Frankau (herewith), who contributes a fine story, "The Parrot" (p. 445) to this number, has written a series of arresting articles for the ROYAL. *I say "arresting" deliberately. They do arrest; they are unskimmable, because Mr. Frankau grips his readers at the outset and never lets go. The first article appears next month and its title is "Woman—the Sphinx." Apart from the natural delight of women at being called sphinxes—or is it sphinges?—the article will enthrall them because it tells them the cold truth about themselves. On the other hand, nothing can interest men so much as the cold truth about women. "The awful part of it is," writes Mr. Frankau, "that the harem-woman will be happy in her harem while her shrill sisters gnash their miserable teeth in a manless market-place."*

Photo Mendoza Galleries.
Mr. Gilbert Frankau.

Need I add that Mr. Frankau is the author of those fascinating novels, "Peter Jackson, Cigar Merchant," and "The Seeds of Enchantment," or that his first short story, like that of so many famous people, appeared in the ROYAL?

Don't forget to take home:

Every Monday - -	PEARSON'S WEEKLY, HOME NOTES.
Every Tuesday - -	PEG'S PAPER.
Every Thursday -	SMALLHOLDER, SCOUT.
22nd of the Month -	THE NOVEL MAGAZINE.
1st of Month - - -	PEARSON'S MAGAZINE, HOME COOKERY.

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Photo *Torrade.*

Miss Georgia O'Ramey in a pensive mood. She has no time to be pensive on the stage.

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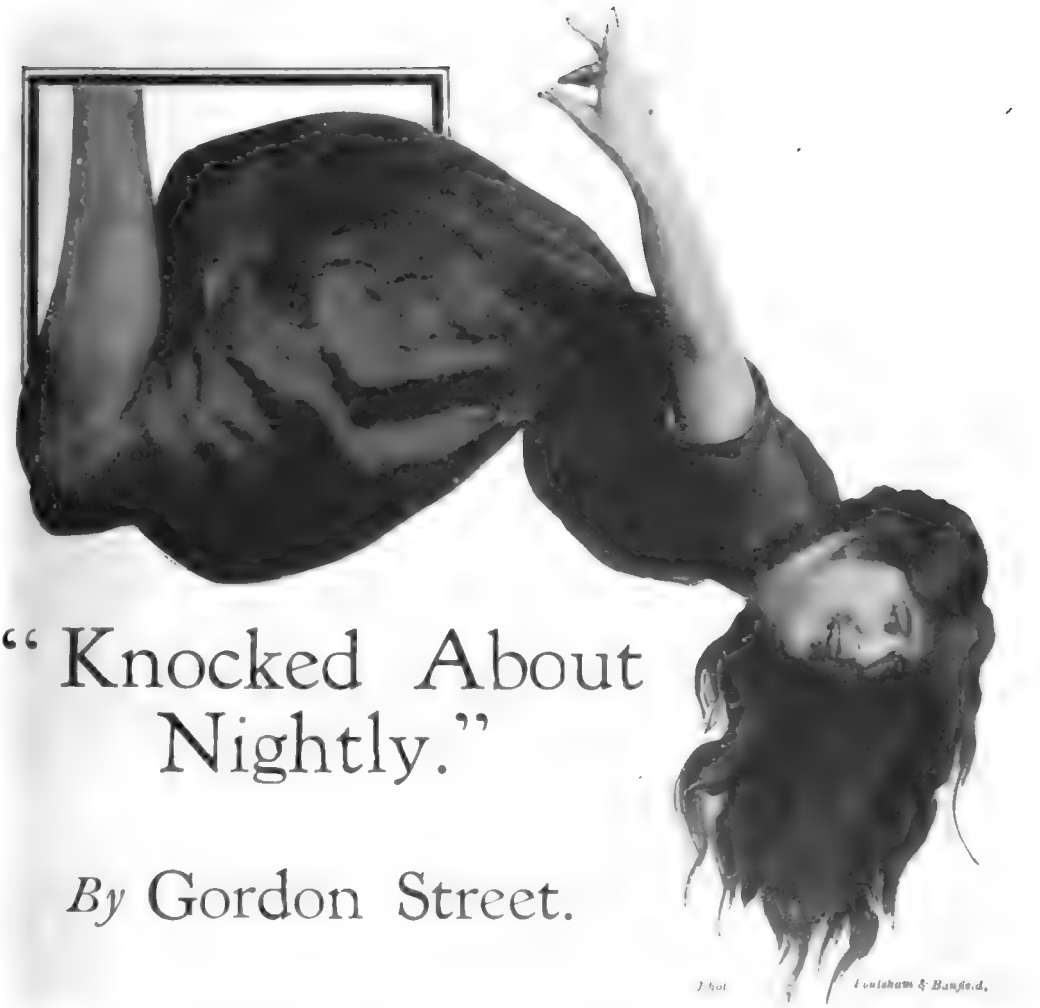

"Knocked About Nightly."

By Gordon Street.

Miss Georgia O'Ramey is, at the time of writing, butchered to make a London holiday every night and twice on matinée days in *London, Paris, and New York* at the London Pavilion. Two strong men throw her about in the most ruthless manner, finally placing her head-first in a big brass musical instrument belonging to the orchestra.

EVERYTHING is peaches down in Georgia—and so's everyone if they are a patch on Miss Georgia O'Ramey. For Georgia O'Ramey certainly is a peach. She is also a Crackerjack, a Regular Fellow, Some Baby, and various other really nice things I can't force my British-made typewriter to set down at the moment.

By this time you will have gathered that Miss O'Ramey is an American, and that I have met her.

On the stage, in that brilliant Cochran-Wimperis-Darewski revue, *London, Paris, and New York*, at the London Pavilion, she is very active. She bites people, kicks them, beats them, and knocks them down. Any evening she might be given in charge for assault and battery and hauled off to Vine Street.

In her turn she gets treated very badly. Two able-bodied men, who object to her joining in a little song, seize and maltreat her. They grab her by the hair, they throw her about and knock her about, they take hold of her and shove—it is the only word—her head into a brass instrument wielded by an accomplice in the orchestra.

In the face of all this, and despite her looks and the frocks she wears, you may be a little inclined to wonder if Georgia O'Ramey is really a nice person to know.

Let me introduce you.

"Come right in," says Miss O'Ramey when you knock upon the door of the

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Photo White's Studios, New York.
Miss O'Ramey can play character parts of the deepest dye.

dressing-room she shares with Miss Nellie Taylor (Mr. Nelson Keys is in the next room, you are intrigued to note), and there she is, with the blackest of black hair, the bluest of blue eyes, and an air of complete and happy femininity about her.

There is no question where the "O" in O'Ramey comes from. Although born in America, she is a perfect Irish type, facially and in colouring, but the brogue of her ancestors has got lost, vanished in the mists—if they have mists there—in that peach of a clime, her namesake.

Very proud of her ancestry is Georgia O'Ramey. "There's been an 'O' in our family ever since we can trace ourselves," she told me.

"I've been on the stage nine years, and d'you know this is the first play for seven years I've worn a pretty frock in. Lovely things pretty frocks, aren't they? What beats me is why any woman, unless she is an actress and has to do it for bread and butter, ever tries to make herself look mannish. Just think of all the beautiful fluffy, filmy things a woman has to wear.

"It's a relief to have got away from rags and tatters for a while. We're not so rough here as at home; there, in one show I had to have a new dress after every performance. My partners deliberately did it in—stamped on it to tear it even. Then there's this business of putting my head down one of the brasses in the orchestra that seems to have tickled you folks over here; why, at home the man used to go on playing while I did it. Gee, it was fierce!

"Not that I'm complaining; I went in for this style of work to get away from playing *ingénues* and sloppy stuff of that sort. I always wanted to be a *comedienne*, and even when I was quite a little thing mother used to say, 'Oh, your middle name's Fun,' because I would always insist upon reading funny stories, singing comic songs, asking to be taken to funny plays, and wanting to hear jokes. That's an expression we have, you know, when anyone's mad about anything: 'Oh, your middle name's so and so,' we say."

I didn't know, but I said that Fun seemed to me a very good middle name for Georgia O'Ramey.

"I suppose it is," she agreed, "but it took a long time to persuade managers that I could ever get any laughs on the stage. They used to laugh at me when I suggested I might, but at last I got the chance to try in *A College Widow*, which you had over here before the War. An actor I had once been in a play with who knew me off the stage got

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me my chance to show I could play comedy. He had become a manager and insisted that I was just the girl they were looking for.

"Since then I've just gone on trying to make audiences laugh. I've got to a point now where I don't believe I could come on the stage, stand still, and fire off clever lines without doing something as well. I just have to fool when I get in front of those footlights.

"Danger in some of the things I do? Well, I guess so, but I look at it this way. I don't mind taking a chance if it amuses the folks in front. That's me all over—anything for a laugh."

She held up the little finger of her left hand. The top joint reminded me of the sort of finger wicket-keepers often have.

"Broken," she explained. "I forgot to tuck it away when I was being thrown about one evening, and so a doctor got a little job. Yes, I'm often quite sore when I come off the stage, and once I was so violent in some of my work that my accident insurance company sent a man to watch my show, and afterwards wrote to say they'd have to cancel my policy. They did, too.

"That was when I was being thrown up from the stage on to a property porch. It was fourteen feet high, and though I had a spring cushion to land on, there would have been a nasty mess if I'd missed it."

Miss O'Ramey is delighted with London, and is even talking of her next part here. "You have the best and kindest of audiences in the world in London," she told me. She has even got used to British food now; doesn't leave her breakfast because there's no grape-fruit on the table, and takes afternoon tea as a matter of course.

But there are things about us that puzzle her very much, the ways of gas-fire men, for example. She badly wanted a gas-fire put in her flat and wrote to the company. Presently a man came to see about it.

Other men followed him at leisurely intervals. One day Miss O'Ramey's Belgian maid happened to be the only person in when one of these men came. Describing his visit, she explained that "he say he will come again on Friday, but he no say which week."

The blood of the O'Rameys, somewhat chilled for lack of a gas-fire, rose at this, and Georgia of that ilk said: "I will stand it no longer; I will write to the Lord Mayor—or to the King."

Photo Yevonde

—Also she can wear a glad frock and look perfectly lovely like this.

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When nothing would induce the Gas Company to supply Miss O'Ramey with a gas-fire she wrote to the King about it.—

She wrote to the King.

"Dear King George," she complained on her post-card, stamped and addressed to Buckingham Palace, "I have been trying to get a gas-fire in for four weeks and can't. Could you please do something?"

The very next day—this is a perfectly true story—gasmen arrived and put in the needed stove.

Wonderful thing coincidence, sometimes!

If you were to ask me what I consider the secret of Georgia O'Ramey's success and popularity, I should answer you that she is so very human and so very interested in what she has to do.

While I was with her for the purposes of this article she had to make-up as a Japanese, and she insisted that I should sit where I could see exactly how it was done.

From observations made, it seems that you first throw away the gasper, stinker, or coffin-tack you are smoking (Georgia O'Ramey has become a perfect martyr to our ten-for-sixpence brands, and will now smoke none other), perform mysterious business with your long black hair, which has to be gathered up into a blob—or whatever the proper word is—and then paint on a funny little mouth.

"A kissable mouth" was what Miss O'Ramey called it, as she functioned with a slim stick of grease-paint; and I, though but a novice in these nice distinctions, felt sure she was right

Photos Foremde.

The very next day men came and fitted the gas-fire—hence the fan

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The Parrot.

By Gilbert Frankau.

Illustrated by Hookway Cowles.

I.

Sir Heron Baynet, best nerve specialist in Harley Street, eyed his patient across the consulting-room desk and asked: "You've told me everything?"

The young man—he looked twenty-five but might have been thirty—hesitated. The blue eyes under the high forehead held steadily to the lined face of the specialist; the smooth cheeks did not twitch; nor was there any neurasthenic droop to the clean-shaven mouth. An athlete, Sir Heron judged—one of those long-limbed, large-handed, deep-voiced, slow-moving Englishmen whose very reticence makes them such difficult subjects for the psycho-therapist. He repeated his question: "You've told me everything, Mr. Margerson?"

"Everything? Yes. I think so." Margerson spoke slowly. "I suppose it's only natural that a man should be a bit"—he fumbled for his word—"abnormal after crashing from fifteen thousand. Shook up my brains, I expect. Not that they were anything to write home about before the accident."

"But you told me the accident, the crash from your 'plane, took place three years ago," persisted the consultant. "And you've only noticed this—er—peculiarity during the last six weeks."

"It may have been coming on for longer than that. I'm afraid I'm not much good at describing my own symptoms."

"And you say you really are a rich man?"

"Rich!" Margerson laughed. "Why, I'm quite indecently wealthy. My father left me a million and a half in securities, besides the family business."

"You sold the business?"

"Yes. For another half-million."

"H'm." Heron Baynet picked a card from the mahogany index, a fountain-pen from the silver rack. "H'm." He began to write. "Margerson, Eric. Twenty-eight. Unmarried." Followed details of blood-pressure, pulse, eyesight, knee-jerk, and a note—"physique magnificent"; then, "Specific delusion—poverty. Incipient insomnia. Admits occasional suicidal impulses. Query—if concealing family history?"

Meanwhile Eric Margerson, watching the movements of the fountain pen, knew that he had made a fool of himself; knew that all doctors, and more especially doctors who pretended to cure a man of "nerves," were professional highwaymen, robbers of the rich. Eric Margerson said to himself: "There's nothing the matter with me. And even if there were, this old idiot couldn't help."

"The old idiot," looking up from his card, said almost the same thing. "I'm afraid I can't be of much use to you, Mr. Margerson," said "the old idiot." "If you take my advice, you'll try and find some interesting work. Idleness in a case such as yours only encourages the mind to neglect its function, which is control. Try to control those delusions, Mr. Margerson. By the way, you're not contemplating matrimony?"

"No. Why do you ask?"

"For various reasons." The specialist took the eye-glasses off his nose, polished them on the sleeve of his coat. "You see, impulses such as you have described are sometimes transmitted from father to son, And in case you *were* contemplating matrimony, it would be very interesting——"

A flicker of annoyance showed in the patient's eyes. Rising, he said: "I'm sorry to have troubled you, doctor."

"Not at all." Through the eye-glasses, replaced on nose, Sir Heron Baynet scrutinised his man. "I regret not to have been of more assistance." And, seeing the youngster take out his pocket-book, Sir Heron added: "Thank you. That will be five guineas."

Counting the five notes from his case, the two half-crowns from his trouser-pocket, Eric Margerson was aware of the horror,

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of the Thing which had driven him to Harley Street. The Thing had followed him; perched—scarlet-pinioned and malignant—on the Japanese screen in the far corner of the consulting-room. The Thing cackled to see the five notes spread on the desk, the two heavy coins atop of the notes. The Thing cackled: "Sand in an hour-glass. It pours away. You can't stop it pouring."

II.

The horror, contrary to custom, followed Eric Margerson down Harley Street. He could almost hear its twisted feet scratching along the pavement. But he refused to let the Thing hurry him. That way, he knew, lay panic.

Sun, emerging sulkily from wet clouds, shone on him strolling; shone on the mud-splashed pavement, on his patent-leather boots, on the gold ring of his umbrella. But no sun shone on the Thing behind, on the intangible horror which drove him, and drove—across Cavendish Square, through Vere Street, over Regent Street, into Bond Street, down Bond Street.

He would have liked to loiter, shopping, in Bond Street. His man had mentioned the need of shirts, of silk socks. He would have to order a supply of cartridges before the shooting-season began. When he stopped outside his gunsmith's, the horror came quite close—whispering,

"Not yet!" whispered the horror. "Sand in an hour-glass. Wait till it pours away. Then——"

Eric Margerson stood for a long time peering at the weapons behind the plate-glass. The smooth, brown barrels of the twelve-bores fascinated him. He wanted to enter the shop, to handle them. But more than the twelve-bores, he wanted to handle the black grips, the black barrels of the pistols. Why shouldn't he buy one of those pistols—the long, single-chambered pistol in the polished-wood case? That one would be best—because there were twenty-five cartridges. . . . "Not yet!" whispered the Thing.

Eric Margerson continued his stroll—and the horror continued to follow. But the scratching feet lagged on the pavement. The scratching feet were afraid. The Thing with the scratching feet knew that if Margerson strolled left-handed out of Bond Street, it would not dare accompany him.

The man in the blue suit, the patent-leather boots, and the bowler hat, who turned into Burlington Gardens and made for the West End Branch of the Bank of England, was a perfectly ordinary, long-limbed denizen of Mayfair—so far removed from those horrors which beset the uncontrolled mind that, looking back, he could no longer visualise the Thing with the scratching feet, could scarcely remember Sir Heron Baynet's question about matrimony, the statement which had followed the question.

Yet one word of that statement, the word "transmitted," flickered in the subconscious dark of Margerson's personality as he entered the Bank; remained with him while he talked with the clerk; refused to be entirely exorcised even by the counting over of a hundred pounds in notes, the stuffing of them into his pocket-book.

"If you'll excuse my mentioning it, sir," said the clerk, "your balance is rather higher than usual. Nearly five thousand. Hadn't we better put a thousand or two on deposit?"

"Thanks—but I don't like letting myself get too low," answered Margerson, and strolled out again into the sunshine. "Transmitted," he thought, "transmitted. I wonder whether I ought to have told the old idiot?"

III.

"My dear, you know I haven't been to a dance since——" Nesta Thring gazed wide-eyed across the shadowy studio.

It was always cold in the studio, even at high noon of a midsummer's day; and always towards tea-time the shadows began to gather. They gathered round Nesta—round the grey-eyed, high-foreheaded girl with the sleek, brown hair and the slim, expressive fingers.

"It wasn't your fault, and you've no right to spoil your life." Eileen Appleby—forthright and buxom, gold hair looped round heavy-lobed ears—tapped impatient shoe on the stained floor. "You've simply got to take hold of yourself, Nes. Besides, this man Margerson's a millionaire."

"I loathe people with money," said Nesta Thring. Her voice was low and controlled—too controlled. As though she dreaded lest speech should betray her thoughts!

"That's sheer pose, Nes. People with money are no worse than people without. As a matter of fact, they're usually better. It's terribly difficult to be really nice when one's poor." Eileen adjusted her hat at the painting-mirror. "Say you'll come, Nes. To oblige me. I can't very well go by myself."

"Why not? This isn't the eighteen-eighties." The shadows were gathering close; Eileen gone, she—Nesta—would be

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All eyes . . . were fixed on Margerson's party as they made their way among the diners to the long table at the far end of the room.
[Page 448, col. 1.]

engulfed in them. Eileen moved to the door.

"Don't be a pig, Nes. It isn't often I ask favours."

"But I haven't got a frock."

"Rubbish. You've got at least six."

"Out of fashion!"

"Fashion be damned, my dear. I'll fetch you at eight," said Eileen Appleby, and bolted to her own studio.

IV.

Margerson, as he dressed for dinner that evening, knew himself nearing the end. His fingers shook as he adjusted his white tie. His eyes, staring back at him from the mirror, seemed the eyes of a dead man—of the man he had found beside the hour-glass.

Every light in the luxurious flat was ablaze; he could hear his valet, busy with hat-brush and pad, in the adjoining room. But neither lights nor valet could keep the

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Thing much longer at bay. Even the pocket-book—and there were three hundred pound notes in the gold-monogrammed pocket-book on the dressing-table—would soon lose its power.

"Get me a sherry-and-bitters, please, Wainwright," called Eric Margerson. "The brown sherry."

"Certainly, sir."

"Is the car ready?"

"Yes, sir."

Drinking the sherry (drink had lost its bite long since, but the habit endured); suffering himself to be helped into his dress-coat, his overcoat; taking hat and stick from the impassive Wainwright, Eric Margerson managed sufficient self-control to visualise the past.

It was early November—four months since he had visited the "old idiot" in Harley Street—four months since he had not told that which must never be told to a living soul—the secret of the dead beside the hour-glass—the secret of the Thing.

The "old idiot" had spoken of work. As if work could exorcise the scarlet-winged horror. Only dissipation, mad nights with girls and wine and music, such a night as the present, could lull the Thing with the scratching feet, the Thing whose cackled "Poverty!" drove him to a passion of reckless spending.

V.

"If you and I had a tenth of that fellow's income," said half-a-dozen well-groomed young men to half-a-dozen *aécolletée* young women, "we certainly could enjoy life."

All eyes at Ciro's Club were fixed on Margerson's party as they made their way among the diners to the long table at the far end of the room. It was a biggish party—sixteen in all; and the long table had been lavishly prepared for it. Flowers banked red and yellow above the oysters and the cocktail glasses. The *maître d'hôtel* stood expectant. Magnums of the best were already cooling in their ice-buckets.

Nesta Thring was glad of the buzz which greeted their entrance, glad of the lavishness, glad—above all—for the sudden yellow outblaze of light in the roof as they sat down. Here were no shadows, only forgetfulness. She had been a fool to hide herself so long. . . .

Except for a tell-tale line or so under her grey eyes, the girl looked almost her young self. To Margerson, sitting between her and Eileen Appleby, she seemed positively radiant. He forgot the remainder of his guests—almost forgot himself—in admiration of the dimpled shoulders peeping from the gold frock, of the smooth hair, the rounded arms, and expressive fingers. He whispered to Eileen: "I didn't quite catch your friend's name"; heard it; began an aimless conversation.

She answered his questions cautiously; seemed averse from chatter. He judged her rather a sober-sides; liked her none the less for that.

The meal progressed. Talk grew louder about them. Music sprayed the room. Wine circulated, bubbling. Coffee came, and liqueurs. Tobacco fumed. They were clearing the centre table from the floor. Music blared. Dancing-time began.

"Shall we?" asked Margerson, laying his half-smoked cigar on the coffee-saucer.

"Not yet. If you don't mind. I'd so much rather watch the first one."

Nesta's voice was still low, controlled. The wine had not moved her. Cigarette between parted lips, she eyed the dancers. They, the dancers, brought things back to one. Was it fair, was it fair to the dead, that she should have come? Pain crept up behind the widening pupils of her grey eyes.

They were alone at the table now, silent. And suddenly Margerson grew aware of the Thing.

Never before had the Thing dared itself in such surroundings. Always, while he danced, it waited for him at home. Then why, to-night of all nights, should he hear the scratching feet through the slither of the dancers!

The scratching feet slithered near and nearer, till he knew the horror perching—scarlet-pinioned and malignant—close to the dimpled shoulders of the girl at his side. The Thing was counting the cost of the dinner he had given. "Eighty pounds," cackled the Thing. "Sand in an hour-glass." Margerson shivered, signalled the *maître-d'hôtel*, drew a hundred-pound note from his pocket-book, and said: "Don't bother about bringing the bill." Then he returned to Nesta.

"I insist on your dancing with me, Miss Thring." Couldn't she see the horror—the horror at her left shoulder?

"I—I really don't want to, Mr. Margerson." Didn't he know, surely everyone in London knew, why it wouldn't be decent of her to dance? "I wonder—I wonder if you'd think it awfully rude of me if I went home?"

"She *can* see it," thought Margerson. "That's why she won't dance with me. That's why she wants to go home." Aloud he said, sullenly: "*I've* stuck it for three

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He gripped her hand, and the grip hurt. But Nesta did not cry out. Better the grip of a maniac's hand . . . than solitude among the shadows. [*Page 451, col. 2.*]

years. You ought to be able to put up with it for one evening."

The *maître-d'hôtel* came back with his change—twenty pounds. He waved the man away. Why didn't the girl say something? Why did she stare and stare at him? He almost screamed at her: "It isn't my fault if you see it. *I* didn't make the Thing. It was made for me."

"Don't!" The control in Nesta's voice snapped as dry twigs across a man's knee. "Don't talk about *him*. I thought he'd stop in the studio. I oughtn't to have come. Let me go back. Get me a taxi, and let me go back."

He caught at her bare arm as she rose. "Don't go. Let *me* go. He—God knows why you call the thing 'he'—won't stop if I don't."

She gazed down, affrighted, into his blue

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eyes; saw them crazy as she felt her own. "I don't know what you mean, unless you, too——"

Margerson sprang to his feet. In his distraught brain the dancing-place was a blazing cage of scarlet wings. He could hear the Thing screaming at him, see its beak already gouging at the grey eyes of the girl. "Let's get away!" he shouted at her—"let's get away from it!"

Syncopated jazz-time drowned the shout of Margerson's voice; dancing heads scarcely noticed the pair as they fled across the parquet.

VI.

Margerson's mind held only vaguest recollections of their flight from Ciro's. He knew that Nesta had left him for a moment to get her cloak, that he had cursed at not finding his car, that she had given some address to the taxi-driver. All else—even the horror—was a blank behind driving rain.

The rain drove and drove, lashing at the windows of their vehicle, blurring the street-lamps to kaleidoscopic spangles of orange and silver. The girl had averted herself. He did not dare speak to her. The hands on her lap were clenched about the white gloves. The feet in the gold shoes arched with tension. She was all tension—wires drawn to breaking-point. He touched her arm; felt the muscles flexed, hard as stone. The rain drove and drove at them. They drove, rigid as statues, through the driving rain.

Their taxi stopped, and she made a movement to get out. He said: "Wait a moment; I'd better pay him," fumbled for money, half-expecting that she would protest.

But Nesta Thring was beyond protestations. Across that rain-beaten courtyard, down that half-lit passage, in the bare studio at end of the passage, waited the shadows. To-night she no longer dared face the shadows alone.

Margerson, following her at a run, felt the rain on his face, felt glad for the coolth of the rain.

A lamp burned in the fan-light above the studio door. In the beam of the light the girl's grey eyes showed like the eyes of a sleepwalker. She found her key, let them in. Margerson saw that every electric in the studio was ablaze. And when, leaving him for a moment, she passed through a door at the end of the studio, he saw that—there, too—shone unshaded electrics.

He took off his sopped hat, his wet over-coat; laid them on a divan. Anthracite burned in the big stove. Heavy curtains had been drawn across the high north windows. It was warm in the studio, unpleasantly warm, he thought, and desolate! Canvases turned to the walls—empty easels—dusty draperies, as though the ghost of a dead painter had forbidden the living to work.

But at least the horror had not followed them through the rain. The horror must have returned to his own flat—to the other place where a soul in darkness tried to stave off darkness with a blaze of lamps.

He said to the girl when she came back to him: "Do you keep them burning night and day?"

"No." The lines under the grey eyes showed as a fine network of pain; the lips hardly moved to their syllables. "No. I tried that. But it didn't do any good. And I was ashamed——"

"You mean, when friends came to see you."

"Yes."

"But you sleep with them on?"

"Of course. You, too?"

Margerson nodded assent.

"Hadn't you better smoke," said the girl. "That usually does good. There's a box of cigarettes somewhere or other. I'll find them."

She moved about the room aimlessly, making curious detours from one piece of furniture to the other.

"Why do you do that?" asked Margerson irritably.

"What?"

"Zig-zag about."

"I'm afraid of running into *him*," said the girl. "And I can't find any cigarettes. You'll have to smoke your own."

She detoured her way back to the stove; accepted a cigarette from his case. His fingers shook as he held the match for her. They faced one another, upright, silent—two souls in Hell. At last the man spoke:

"You've tried doctors, I suppose?"

"Only one. And he wanted to know too much. I—I hated him for pretending not to know, for trying to make me tell him. You see, he must have known *really*. Everybody knows about Nesta Thring. You know, of course. That's why you came in with me."

"I don't." Margerson's voice was steady. For the moment his mind controlled itself. "I don't. Honour bright, I haven't got the faintest idea."

She came closer. Her eyes peered up at him. "You swear that . . . On your honour. Then I'll tell you. It may help.

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The doctor said it would help. But he was only pretending not to know—— Give me another cigarette."

He gave her the cigarette, and she began to speak, half to herself, half to him.

"I'm Nesta Thring. Everybody except—I've forgotten your name—but everybody except you knows about Nesta Thring. She was going to be married. I mustn't tell you his name. That wouldn't be fair. But he was a painter and he wanted to marry Nesta. And Nesta Thring promised. That was the beastly part of it; she promised. The coroner made her admit——"

"The coroner?" Margerson's face twitched.

"Of course. There had to be a coroner. You see, when Nesta Thring broke her promise, when she told him that she couldn't marry a poor man, he"—Margerson, bending down, only just caught the low words—"he killed himself. Poor Nesta! It wasn't her fault. She never thought when she told him. And she's paid for it. A hundred times over she's paid for it. *He* made her pay for it. Every night *he* sits and watches her. And to-night——" The voice broke in her throat; she put out a hand to him, and he caught at it, as a man drowning might catch at a thrown rope.

"Go on!" he prompted. "What happened to-night?"

"He followed me out. He was in the courtyard when Eileen came to fetch me. Eileen couldn't see him. I thought he'd gone back to the studio. But he hadn't. He followed me. You saw him at the dance." Her fingers clutched. "You *did* see him?"

And suddenly Margerson laughed, a high-pitched, quavering laugh, a madman's laugh.

"Him? Him? Of course I didn't see him. Why should I? I saw the parrot. It was trying to scratch your eyes out. That's why I took you away."

"The parrot?" Now fear had its way with Nesta Thring. Her legs shook under the gold frock. And yet, this was a different fear. Physical! Almost a relief after the shadowy apprehensions of the mind!

"Yes. The parrot. The poor old governor's parrot. It wasn't really a parrot. It was a macaw. Scarlet! Its wings were all scarlet, and its feet scratched. He said in his letter that I ought to sell the parrot. That it was worth thirty shillings."

"Who said?" Somehow the haze of many months had cleared from Nesta's mind. She knew herself still afraid, yet with a pleasant fear. Physical! Intelligible! Fear of the man whose laugh still rang in her ears.

"The governor, of course."

"Your father?"

"Yes." Margerson began laughing again. "Would you like to hear about him? It's a lovely story. I've never told it to anyone before. But you're haunted, too. So it doesn't matter. And besides"—his voice dropped, grew cunning—"*we* didn't have a coroner. Nobody knows anything, except myself and the parrot. I thought I'd killed the parrot. But it won't die. They never do—when they've got scarlet wings."

He gripped her hand, and the grip hurt. But Nesta did not cry out. Better the grip of a maniac's hand, the sound of a maniac's voice, than solitude among the shadows.

She wondered, as he began to speak, what could have happened to the shadows. There were no shadows in the studio, only a blaze of raw light under which she, Nesta Thring, stood gripped by a madman.

"You're a pretty woman," said the madman. "Too pretty to kill yourself. But, of course, you will kill yourself. We all do—in the end. My governor did. Mad as a hatter, of course. Poor old governor. He thought he was ruined. That was *his* horror—Money. I've seen him running up and down the office, swearing we were going bankrupt, swearing the clerks were stealing the postage stamps. Funny! Because he left a couple of millions—when he killed himself. I suppose it was my fault in a way. I used to laugh at him. You couldn't help laughing, especially about the clock. I haven't told you about the clock——"

He stopped for a moment; and it came to Nesta—how, she did not know—that his voice altered; became the voice of an old man.

"If only I weren't so tired, I could tell you a lot about the clock. It stood in the governor's bedroom. A grandfather clock. Tick! Tick! Tick! You know the kind. He said the ticking prevented his going to sleep. Silly old governor, as if anyone ever did go to sleep. You and I don't, do we? So we moved it into the study, where the parrot was."

The grip on Nesta's fingers relaxed.

"But he took a dislike to it. He said he wouldn't live with any damn' clock. Clocks made too much noise. He wanted an hour-glass. So we bought him one. . . . He'd given up the business by then. I made him. You see, he didn't want to pay the wages. You've no idea what a fight I had about the wages—every week—every single week, till he gave it up. I *was* glad when he gave it up. . . . And then, of course, he killed himself."

In the raw glare Margerson's blue eyes

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showed as the eyes of a sleepwalker, as Nesta's eyes had shown.

"You're rather like what I remember of my mother. You're much too pretty to kill yourself. I shouldn't, if I were you. It's only when you don't tell people that it's so bad. The old idiot in Harley Street knew that. *I* told him it came from the crash. It didn't, of course. The crash only re-started it. One loses control, you know. I kept it under for years—till the crash. But I can't keep it under control any more. That's why I'm telling you. I used to go and see him every evening, after office hours.

"He *was* funny—little old man in a dressing-gown, with his hour-glass, and his macaw, and his 'Well, Eric; made any money to-day, Eric? Can you lend your father any money to-day, Eric?' But the last time I went, he didn't say anything at all. He was dead, you see. Dead as a doornail. And the sand had run out of the hour-glass; and the parrot had got out of its cage. There was a letter, of course, to say why he'd done it. 'No more money. Not a bob in the house.' That's what he wrote. *You'll* write a letter when you do it. One simply has to write a letter. I've written three already. You'll burn them for me, won't you?"

The man's voice was failing. He staggered where he stood, and Nesta—understanding a little—helped him towards the divan.

"I burnt his—or they'd have brought it in suicide. And after the inquest I killed the parrot. Poor old parrot! But it had to be killed. It knew too much. 'Eric,' it used to cackle, 'Eric, made any money, Eric?' So I wrung its neck." Words died to a whisper. "If only—their feet—wouldn't—scratch—after you wring their necks——"

Margerson sank down on to the divan; and Nesta, bending over him, heard a boy's voice issue from the half-closed lips. "Is that you, mater?" said the boy's voice. "Nice of you to come in and say good-night. I'm most awfully sleepy. Give me a kiss before I go to sleep."

VII.

Eileen Appleby, returning anxious from Ciro's, saw Nesta Thring's door ajar, crept in. No lights burned in the studio; but a crimson glow from the anthracite stove revealed Margerson, full length on the divan, a purple cushion under his head. And by Margerson's side, watchful in a deep chair, sat Nesta.

"He's asleep," whispered Nesta. "You mustn't turn the lights on. You mustn't wake him."

"But, my dear——"

"Hush! You don't know. Pray God that you never will know. He's been down into the valley of the shadow. But I'm going to save him, Eileen. And I'm going to save myself. Don't you understand? If he's saved, I'm saved too. A life for a life."

But neither then nor thereafter did Eileen Appleby understand. To Eileen Appleby and the friends of Eileen Appleby it always seems that "Nesta was damned lucky to marry a millionaire—especially after that other business."

FAITHLESS.

When I cross from Regent Street,
  Breasting that swift-surging tide—
(Flotsam fair, and frail, and sweet!)
  Feet that are not, go beside.

When I mount, at Charing Cross,
  For an outbound fairyland,
God! the sudden stroke of loss—
  Someone tries to touch my hand.

When I fold my peace away,
  When I cede a conquered head—
Is it you, who dares to pray
  Kneeling with me by the bed?

Gwen Nisbet.

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What Day Is It?

By J. C. Howard.

Illustrated by Charles Crombie.

One morning during the coal-strike of 1893, the paddle steamer that carried cargoes between Cronin's Island and the mainland waddled unsteadily to the roughly fashioned jetty-side. Micky Delahunter, skipper and owner, stepped ashore. He carried half-a-dozen letters and a newspaper, and these he took to the house of Father Tom McDermott.

"'Tis not your day, Micky," said the priest.

"And well do I know ut, Father," returned Micky. "But bad news do I bring to ye and the folks on Cronin's."

"What would the matter be?" asked Father Tom.

"'Tis a coal-stroike, Father. They be tellin' me at the railway beyant there that 'tis the miners that will not wur-rk in the pits."

"Have ye not coal in hand, Micky?"

"I have enough for thray trips more. After that, not the sorriest lump of ut have I got or can I come by."

The old priest nodded his head reflectively and was silent.

"'Tis no great matter," he said at last. "Whin I was a bhoy here, there was no staymer. By the grace of God, Cronin's can do without a staymer to-day."

So Micky ran his boat for three times more, and Father Tom warned the islanders that these were the last voyages until Micky could buy coal again. Cronin's people were not greatly disturbed. They had got into the way of depending on the steamer, but if it was true that it could not be helped—why, the Lord was good and they would come through. In case of emergency one of the larger fishing smacks could go over to Cullabeg on the mainland.

Father McDermott had explained to them that it was not Micky's fault. "'Tis a stroike," said he. "Micky cannot buy coal for his staymer. Will it matter to us? Sorra a bit. Have ye not fish that ye can eat? Have ye not flour in your houses to make bread? Is there half-a-dozen of ye that gets a loine or a letter once a month? No. Then Cronin's Island can do without a staymship. And let no man say we cannot."

Whether they could or could not, there was no option in the matter. And so Micky left them.

Now it appears that, to begin with, the folk on Cronin's Isle scarcely missed their "staymer." There had been market days on Tuesdays and Fridays, and at first these continued. Only, instead of salting their fish, the fishermen sold it fresh to the farmers, and the farmers sold their butter and eggs and chickens and vegetables to the fishermen's wives.

But since in such a small place it was easy to do the little bit of buying and selling between neighbours and friends, the market became deserted by everybody and they let it slide altogether. There would be no more markets till the "staymer" ran again.

The islanders were quite comfortable, seemed happy and contented. There was no shortage of anything.

"Sure 'tis a blessing in disguise," said Father McDermott more than once. "We are cut off from the world and its troubles. We have here no strife, no discord. Every man is another man's friend. Cronin's is a grand spot, and happy am I to be the prayste of ut."

And Cronin's were happy in their priest too. For a kindlier, worthier man never walked down a boreen. Broad he was, and the fine figure of a man. And not a soul on Cronin's dared to miss Mass on a Sunday morning. Not only would he be imperilling his soul, but he ran the risk of Father McDermott's strong right arm as well. Poor Father McDermott! They took him from his beloved Cronin's and sent him to labour in a big, evil-smelling town in the English Potteries.

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But that was afterwards. Father Tom had yet to play his stormy little part on Cronin's, and all it meant to him. What a world, or—in its miniature—what an island full of even'fulness hangs on trifles! For 'twas a trifle after all that began it.

During twenty years the Reverend Father McDermott had read his daily office, walking the while his tiny garden, his well-thumbed breviary in his hand. For every day in the year there was a different office for him to say. A tiny prayer, a little canticle, a hymn, a verse or two of the Psalms. Well did Father Tom know them all. Every day was familiar. The breviary opened by itself in fifty places.

There had been originally a broad gold ribbon that acted as bookmarker, but long usage had worn it thin and ragged until at last it fell away altogether and was lost. And so, when the old priest opened his breviary one sunny October morning he found himself hesitating, doubtful, and at last utterly perplexed. Which office had he said yesterday? Surely he remembered those little verses yesterday morning? And here he was on the point of saying them again. No matter. He would finish the prayer. Was not all prayer, to-day's or yesterday's, an offering to God? That finished, he would say the office of to-day as well.

But when he had finished the familiar prayer, the priest looked with a startled eye upon the book in his hands. To-morrow was the Sunday, and he had almost forgotten it. Praise be to God that he had such a memory. Every man, woman, and child that could walk would be at nine o'clock Mass in the morning. And he had been thinking that to-day was Friday.

Now, there were two Masses on Sundays, at seven, as on week days, and at nine o'clock. Every week-day Father Tom breakfasted at eight. And when the following morning he walked into his study after early Mass, there was an appetising smell of fried bacon and eggs; to say nothing of buttered toast in a covered dish and hot coffee all ready on his table.

Father Tom's housekeeper entered with a smiling face, a dish of sizzling rashers in her hand.

"You have mistaken the day, Margaret," said Father McDermott. "'Tis Sunday, and I have still the late Mass to say."

Mrs. Margaret stopped short within the doorway and stared at him.

"Are you sure, Father? I had thought it was Saturday."

"'Tis Sunday, my child. Take my breakfast away till after Mass."

And Mrs. Margaret, wonderingly, complied. She had not made a mistake in fifteen years. But then Father Tom must know. Was he not the priest and a scholar?

At ten minutes to nine, Father McDermott noticed with a start that the bell was not ringing for Mass. Hastily he sought the grave-digger who acted also as bell-ringer, and questioned him.

Why was he late in ringing the bell for Mass?

"'Twas rung to the minute this morning Father."

"But why are you not ringing it now?"

The sexton scratched his head.

"If 'tis a Saint's Day," said he.

"'Tis Sunday," said Father Tom.

"'Tis Saturday, saving your Reverence."

"'Tis Sunday. Am I not the priest? Do I not know? Ring the bell at once."

Out into the village street came the astonished islanders. What was the church bell ringing for? Down the cobbles from house to house ran young Larry Conolly's boy, sent by the repentant sexton.

"'Tis Sunday," the boy told them as he ran. "Father Tom is waiting to say Mass."

"Faith and Glory," exclaimed a fisherman's wife, "and so it is. But what wid there being no markets, and no boats, sure we are all behind. What will Father Tom be after saying at all?"

"But 'tis Saturday," declared a shopkeeper. "Doesn't Tim Callagham bring me fish on Fridays, and wasn't it yesterday?"

"Father Tom wouldn't be wrong," said somebody else.

"He would not," declared others. And already a tiny stream of worshippers was entering the church.

A little while later, there was a fair congregation. But Father McDermott knew that at least half the island had yet to arrive. He waited till the half-hour, and then reluctantly began. His heart was heavy, and he was much distracted.

He and he alone was to blame. He ought to have had a calendar on the church door. 'Twas no doubt because of their isolation. No steamer to call at the island, no market days. Naturally they lost count of time. But he, their priest, ought to have known. His was the sin of two to three hundred people who were absent this Sabbath morning. And the weight of it bent his broad old shoulders as he turned his missal, and bowed his knee.

Mass over, Father Tom came to the altar-rails, and addressed them.

"Many of ye are not here," said he. "'Tis because of being cut off from the mainland. Ye have mixed up the days. But 'twas ever the

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duty of the clergy to decide upon the days of the year. And I, who am alone, should have kept careful reckoning and told ye all beforehand. I will warn ye all for next Sunday. But may God forgive me and the many that are in sin to-day by missing the Holy Mass."

And Father Tom's voice broke as he blessed them, and they passed out into the sunshine.

Outside the church there was much argument. A considerable proportion of the village clung obstinately to the belief that the day was Saturday, but for the majority the word of Father McDermott was the law itself.

"Is he not the priest?" said these. And Sunday the day became for everybody, even to the astonished fishing smacks that were recalled by men that put off in rowing boats at Father Tom's command.

But in the more distant parts of the island—and Cronin's is some twenty miles at its greatest length—the news travelled but slowly, and was received with doubt. Methodical farmers who had planned a full week's work heard the story with incredulous laughter.

"Ye will see meat Mass to-morrow morning, me boy," they told the bringer of the news.

Next morning saw nearly everyone in the island in the neighbourhood of the church. There were two distinct parties, those who supported Father McDermott, and those who did not. Those who declared the day was Sunday had come to mass. The other section had come to see.

Father Tom met them at the church door.

"I was expecting ye," he told them, "but 'tis twenty-four hours late ye are. 'Twas yesterday, Sunday. To-day is Monday. I ought to have told ye in time. I am here to say Mass for ye, but remimber ye missed Mass yesterday, and beg pardon of the Merciful God."

"But it is Sunday, this day, Father," the farmers told him. "Is there wan of us that would forgit the day, with a full week's wur-rk to do and all? Begging your Riverence's pardon, but ye make a mistake."

"'Tis Monday," said Father Tom simply. "Am I not the priest?" And for most of them it was enough. They went humbly within. Bolder spirits, however, went a little jestingly, and some few in anger and derision.

As the day grew on there was but one subject that Cronin's Island would discuss. You were either a Sunday-man, or a Monday-man. And to be a Sunday-man was to be against Father Tom, and bad taste.

During the week ill-feeling grew, until when Father Tom had announced that the morrow was Sunday, in every cottage on the island there were found those who obstinately stayed away from the Mass, worked throughout the day, and presented themselves for Mass on the morrow.

Things grew from bad to worse, until the Sunday-men and the Monday-men would no longer exchange a civil word. Father McDermott considered whether he ought not to send to Cullabeg to make his conviction a certainty. But how could he be wrong? Had he not his breviary to guide him? Besides which it was stormy weather, and the biggest and safest fishing boat belonged to the most obstinate Sunday-man of them all.

In many homes the matter was a joke that only distress on Father Tom's behalf could spoil. In others it was a source of quarrels and bickering. Between neighbours it meant wordy warfare, and finally, in one instance—blows. In the parlour of an ale-house, John Sheehan, the owner of the biggest fishing boat, went so far as to call Father McDermott a fool and a liar, and Michael Donovan, farmer, hit him on the mouth. Eager hands hustled them outside, and they fought a long and bloody battle in the village street. The two had been fast friends. They parted bitter enemies. But worse was to follow. Donovan's daughter, Molly, was to marry James Sheehan, the son of John. All the island knew it. Both men declared the marriage broken off.

"No daughter of mine," declared Donovan, "shall marry a man who has called the prayste a liar."

"Ye don't marry into a family of fools and worse," John Sheehan told his son.

Molly Donovan met James Sheehan secretly on the sea-shore, and they swore eternal love and faithfulness.

"Twill blow over, Molly dear," said James, confidently. "One day the boat will come from Cullabeg, and we shall foind out if Father Tom is roight. Me father is an obstinate man. But if he finds he is wrong, he would be the first to beg pardon of Father McDermott."

Molly was crying softly on his shoulder; her tiny frame shook with sobbing. Her father would never forgive, never consent. Her long black hair fell loosely round her in the violence of her grief, her big blue eyes stared out to the dark sea. Salt spray beat icily on their cheeks. Molly was cold, miserable, afraid.

"I'll take ye, Molly," he told her, "if I have to run to Americky."

"Oh, James, James Sheehan, what is to become of me?"

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"'Twill be all right, Molly darlint. Be aisy now. 'Tis laughin' we will be."

"It can never be now, James, never. I am cold, and 'tis late. I must go."

He took her tenderly to the lane by her father's house.

Molly's mother was awaiting her arrival. She was bitterly angry.

"'Tis out with that blackguard, James Sheehan, ye have been, ye shameless girl. And did not yer father and meself forbid it? Did not his father call the prayste a liar? Is he not the worst Sunday-man of them all? A disgrace to the island. Better ye dropped dead than marry that man's son."

"Mother, Mother, I must. I must."

"You mane?"

"Oh Mother, Mother, 'tis with choild I am."

"Then out of this house do ye go. Shame on your poor father. Oh, wirrah, wirrah, what'll we do at all? Oh, the blackguard, the scoundrel!"

But she made no movement to put Molly out of doors. She opened the door of the stairs instead. And Molly went gladly enough to bed, to weep bitterly in despair.

Donovan entered weary and in an evil mood. There were garnered crops that he could not sell. and could but improperly house; he wanted potash for his fields, oat-cake for his cattle. The disastrous tidings that his wife had for him fanned his ill-humour to frenzy. For a moment he dreamt of murder. But he was a God-fearing man. No. He must find a way to make John Sheehan eat dirt without losing his soul. Next morning he tramped stolidly over to the fisherman's house. Sheehan would have slammed the door in his face, but Donovan's great boot was already between the door and its framework.

"I have come to talk business not religion," he said firmly. "Let me in."

Both men entered the parlour, and stood glaring stonily at each other.

"Well?" asked John Sheehan.

"Ye sold me a field," said Donovan. "'Tis bad land. I want me money back."

"Ye will not get it," declared Sheehan shortly. "The land is good land; 'twas me father's."

"There was an agrayment," said Donovan.

"Correctly made."

"According to ye, it was not."

"How so?"

"'Twas made three weeks ago. On a Monday. By the lie ye gave Father McDermott, that day was a Sunday. If ye believe what ye say, thin Sunday was the day. Ye know that no man can buy or sell land on a Sunday. I can break that agrayment. The land is bad land. I want me money."

Sheehan was beaten and he knew it. "I'll give it ye," he said. "Not because the land is not good. 'Tis of the best in the island. But the day was Sunday, and I am no Sabbath-breaker. 'Twould be unlucky for me to kape it."

He opened an oaken coffer and took out a bundle of notes.

"There," said he, and tossed them on to the table. "The same notes ye gave me."

Donovan laid on the table the deed of sale. He put the notes in his pocket and walked out. He had won, but he was disappointed. Sheehan, whom he had meant to cover with ridicule, had sacrificed a large sum to affirm a principle. Besides which Donovan himself would have been glad to keep the land which was excellent and adjoined his own.

Half-way down the garden path, he remembered. He had not come about the land only. He turned and faced Sheehan at the door.

"Your son. James," he said bluntly, "has seduced my daughter."

"What of it?" asked Sheehan coolly, though the news was a shock to him.

"'Tis hanged he should be," said Dovovan.

"Better that, than marry one of yeer brood."

"And so think I. Better disgrace to my blood, than any spawn of yours to wed her."

"I can pay," said Sheehan coldly.

"Do you think the Donovans are to be bought with dirrty money?"

"'Tis your fault. You and yeer fool prayste. What are ye going to do?"

"Wait and ye'll see," said Donovan. although he had in his mind no definite plan of any kind.

"Look here, Mike Donovan," said the other threateningly, "ye can do yeer worst. But remember. Any trick, dirty or otherwise that ye play on me or on me son James will be requited at once and doubly so, if 'tis not that it is anticipated beforehand, and be damned to ye." Sheehan shut the door with a bang. Donovan turned slowly towards his farm.

Savagely he worked all day; there was much to do. He feared that last crop of hay was damp. He ought to have the whole lot out-of-doors for awhile. But how to spare the men? Generally they got a few from the mainland. This year it had been impossible. He wanted those phosphates. Everything was wrong, wrong. And as an undercurrent to his thoughts ran the trouble of Molly. What would folks think? What

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would the island say? In his youth he had seen women stoned out of the villages, had helped to jeer and mock and stone. Would his own little Mol y come to that?

He found manure that might help the land, and had it spread. He put men to take the damp hay from the barn, working hard himself to kill thought until the evening.

In the twilight he entered the barn to estimate the quantity to be removed on the morrow, and found young James Sheehan near the wide barn-door. The youngster had come on the off-chance of finding Molly, but the sight of him was too much for Donovan. Savagely he leapt upon John Sheehan's son and smote him with the full force of his right arm. The boy crashed backwards, and his head hit the oaken door. He dropped like a log and lay across the doorway, a tiny trickle of blood from the back of his head reddening the loose hay around him.

Excited farm-hands came running. Donovan turned away. The blackguard wasn't much hurt. Such as he deserved all they got. Moodily he took his supper and went up to bed. He heard a cart being harnessed in the yard below. His men were taking young Sheehan home. So much the better; he made no interference.

Some three hours later he woke from a heavy sleep. There was something wrong. The whole room was brightly lit as by a fire close at hand. He smelt the acrid smoke of burning timber and rushed to the window. The barn where he had struck young Sheehan was ablaze. His hay was on fire. Who had done this? John Sheehan's warning of the morning raced through his brain. "Any dirty trick or otherwise on me or my son James will be requited, if not anticipated." There was no doubt about it. John Sheehan or his son James had done this thing. What was James Sheehan doing in the barn?

First they must put out the fire. Then he would see. And as he rushed downstairs and through the kitchen, he had yet time to glance lovingly at a double-barrelled shot-gun that hung upon the wall facing the door.

His wife and Molly had followed him downstairs.

The farm hands were already out. Willing neighbours from half the island came running partly-dressed to lend a hand. Father McDermott himself had seen the light in the sky, and became one of a chain of men and women that passed buckets from hand to hand. They tore down joists, they hacked away burning timber. But while they hoped to save the neighbouring outhouses, there was no prospect whatever of saving the barn or its contents. Michael handed his bucket to the next man, and looked around him. Among the workers he saw his wife and Molly. Mrs. Donovan was as strong as a horse, he knew. She could do a full man's work at the fire. It would keep her out of the way. Molly he ordered roughly to bed. Father McDermott had thrown himself whole-heartedly into his self-imposed task. Not far away he saw his brother Pat, and although they had not for some time been on the best of terms, Michael tapped him on the shoulder, nodding towards the farmhouse. Pat Donovan followed him into the kitchen.

This brother of Michael's was something of a ne'er-do-well. He had picked up a living loading and unloading when the steamer called. Lately he had done nothing whatever. Michael pointed to a chair and produced whisky. Both men drained their glasses at a gulp, Patrick because he seldom got a drink, Michael because his trouble was greater than he could bear.

"'Twas John Sheehan did that on me," said Michael, pointing to the red blaze without. And grimly he told his story—Sheehan's threats, his own attack on the boy in the barn. He did not speak of Molly. That he could not bring himself to talk about.

The other listened, his thick-set face dark, ominous.

"We'll have the loife out of him," Pat cried excitedly. "The dir-rty, blaspheming blackguard! Him that give the lie to the prayste! The worst Sunday-man in the island. There be twenty men here that ask no more than to wipe out his insults to Father Tom upon his damned carcase. Wait, I'll get the bhoys."

And Michael made no movement to restrain him.

In a few minutes the kitchen was fil'ed with excited islanders, Monday-men all, with minds embittered to the point of believing anything possible from the Sunday-men who could deliberately insult the priest.

"We'll have him out of it!" they cried excitedly. "Him and his son. We'll shoot the both of them for a pair of cowardly, dirty, blasphemin' hounds!"

There was no lack of arms on Cronin's. Every man had a shot-gun of sorts. For most of them it was a matter of three or four hundred yards across the fields to fetch them. And within ten minutes a band of armed and excited men took the road for John Sheehan's house.

Had Father Tom had the least idea of what was happening he would have found it an easy matter to prevent their murderous

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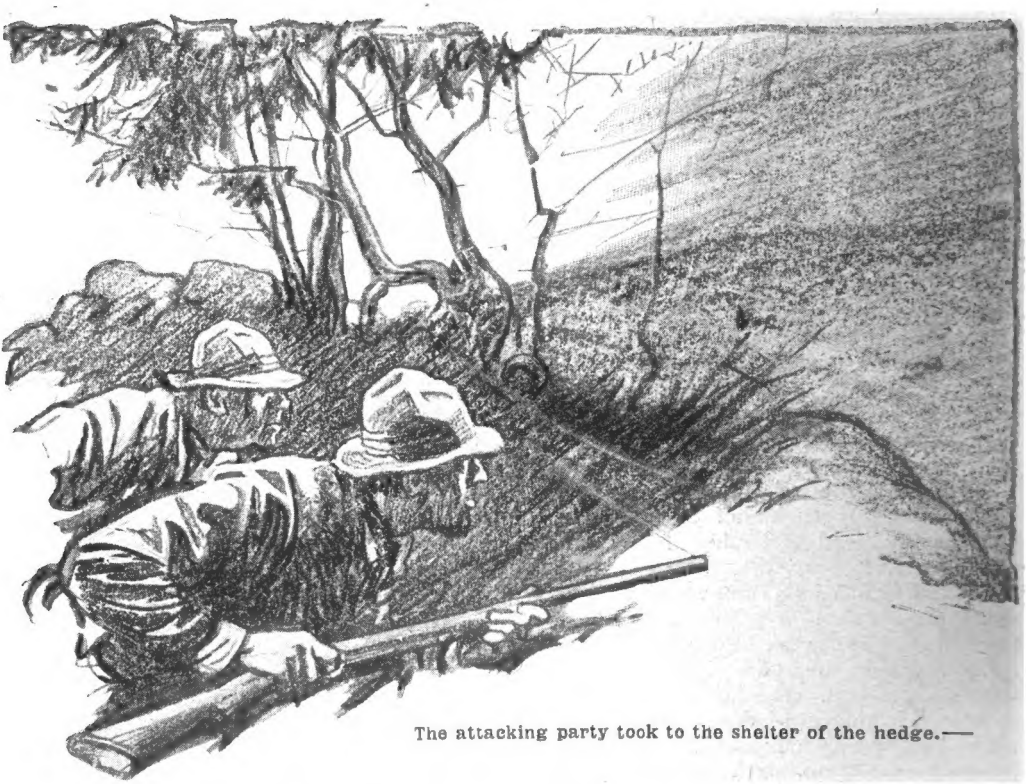

The attacking party took to the shelter of the hedge.—

purpose. But he was doing three men's work beside the blazing barn. In the absence of Donovan he had taken charge of operations. His old, grey hair floating in the night wind, his cassock streaming with water, he encouraged, directed, fought manfully a losing battle against the blaze.

Suddenly he felt himself plucked by the arm, and turning saw Molly Donovan. He bent to listen to her as she shouted in his ear. The roar of the fire and the crackling of burning timber made it difficult to hear.

"Father Tom, Father Tom! They're murdering John Sheehan."

"What's that ye say, child?"

"Me father, me uncle Pat, and Tim Hooley, and a lot of men have gone to shoot John Sheehan."

"Glory be to God, and why so?"

"They say he fired me father's barn."

"Are ye sure, child?"

"They have gone down the road."

"Does John Sheehan know?"

"'Tis I that warned him. I met them coming back." And seeing that he understood, the girl turned and raced madly down the road.

The old priest lost no time. He knew his people. He recognised the wild blood that had got out of hand.

"'Tis murder there will be," said he, and casting aside an axe he held, he set out rapidly towards Sheehan's. Suddenly he heard the noise of firing, and broke into a run.

John Sheehan had taken full advantage of the warning he had received. His first step had been to send his wife to summon help. In the houses of Sunday-men sympathisers—who had each and all kept away from Donovan's fire—she told her excited tale. The Sunday-men turned out in force. And on the road near Sheehan's house the two hostile groups came into collision. They had rifles in their hands; bitter, religious feeling had fanned their hostility to madness, and almost at once somebody fired. The result was a volley from the Monday-men. A Sunday-man screamed and fell. There was a murderous rush from the Donovans and their friends. To the shouting of John Sheehan at a window, the Sunday-men fell back upon the house. They got in, not without casualties; they locked and bolted the doors. The crowd outside riddled the windows with leaden shot. The men within brought mattresses and barricaded the empty window frames. Shots rang out from the windows, and here and there a man fell.

The attacking party took to the shelter of the hedge.

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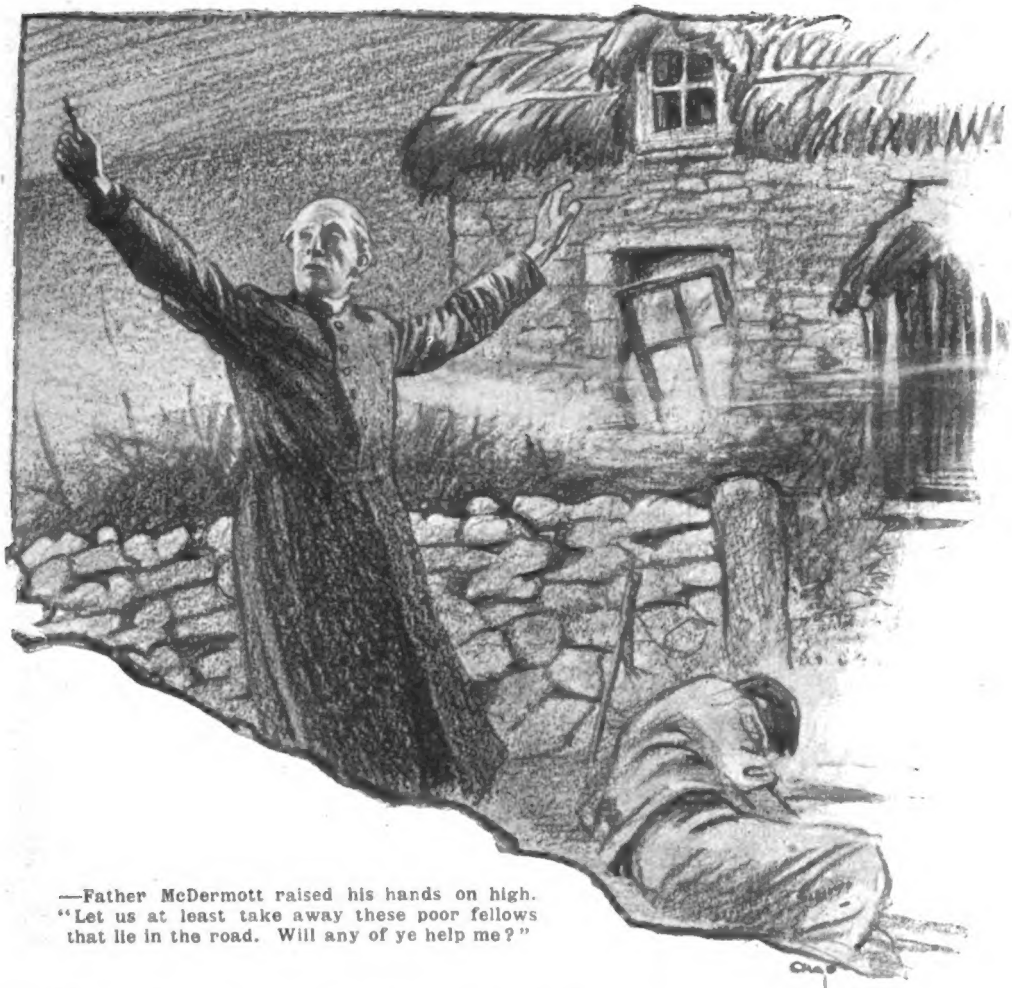

—Father McDermott raised his hands on high. "Let us at least take away these poor fellows that lie in the road. Will any of ye help me?"

"Drop a man when ye see him move," counselled Pat Donovan. "Get good cover."

And down the road between the house and the hedge came Father McDermott. Too late. Both sides had drawn blood. His power and influence were for the moment utterly gone.

"I will stand here upon the road between ye," he said. "I will have no murder done."

"Go away, Father, dear, it is shot ye will be," said the voice of Sheehan from a window, and instantly the leaden bullets rained on the brickwork around the window, into the mattress that hid him.

Father McDermott raised his hands on high.

"Let us at least take away these poor fellows that lie in the road. Will any of ye help me?"

Michael Donovan and several more left the shelter of the hedge and stepped forward. There was no sign from the house, and Donovan and another lifted a Sunday-man who had been shot through the leg. They carried him two hundred yards down the road, and set him on a patch of turf by the roadside. The man caught Donovan's arm.

"Mind what ye do, Mike Donovan," said the wounded man. "Ye'er daughter is in that house."

"My Molly?"

"Herself. She is looking after young James Sheehan, whom ye have half kilt."

The father's face turned to stone.

"Then will she take her chance with the blackguards she prefers to her own father. My curse upon her for a shameless child."

Grimly he was rushing back to the hedge; he was seeing red. He wanted to get his hands on his rifle and shoot, shoot. Father Tom's burly figure blocked his path.

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"Go back, Michael Donovan."

"I will not, Father."

The old priest raised a thick stick he held in his hand. Michael did not move. The stick descended heavily on his shoulders. Once again, and yet again.

"Ye can bate me, Father, but I will have the loife of that man, Sheehan."

"Oh, my son, my son," said Father Tom brokenly, and Donovan strode past him to the hedge.

The duel recommenced. The least movement on either side brought a storm of shot. In the distance the red glow of Donovan's barn slowly burnt itself out. At nearer hand, in both directions along the road, a crowd of weeping women watched the slow battle. Hour after hour did Father Tom walk the road, arguing, commanding, expostulating. All in vain.

With an occasional shot from either side throughout the long day, attackers and besieged waited, watching for they knew not what. At last Pat Donovan spoke to his brother.

"When 'tis dark," said he, "we will blow open the door of the house. I know where there is dynamite. 'Twas for some blasting on the rocks last year that Micky Delahunter had."

"D'ye know how to use it?" asked Michael.

"Do I not," returned his brother fiercely.

"Good," said Michael. "Do you be fetching it now." And Patrick went. He was not long away, and when he returned Michael idly watched his preparations. He did not greatly care how he got to grips with John Sheehan. But kill him he would.

And so at nightfall, with a few hasty words of consultation, the Monday-men rose up suddenly and rushed the house. Under the shelter of the porch they clung fiercely in a body. Pat Donovan worked swiftly and excitedly at something by the door. Suddenly he shouted, and the group rushed back across the road. There was a loud explosion, and John Sheehan's porch was full of flame and fire.

Amid shouts, screams, curses, and a hail of bullets they rushed into the house. Within they met a number of terrified defenders who, cowed by the explosion, simply held up their hands. Michael Donovan pressed forward.

"Lay down yeer guns," he commanded, "and go out of this. I have no quarrel with ye. 'Tis John Sheehan I want."

"Yeer daughter's in there with young James," a man told him. He turned towards the door.

"Guard the stairs all of ye for John Sheehan," he commanded.

"Sheehan is upstairs alone," said a Sunday-man. "He says he will not come down."

"He'll have to come out soon," said Pat Donovan. "Look!" And Michael looked and saw that the woodwork above the doorway was a mass of flames. The eager tongues licked the beams of the passage ceiling.

He strode fiercely into the room where they said his daughter was. She sat by the bedside of young Sheehan, who lay, his head swathed in bandages. After the uproar outside the quiet calm of this sick-room chilled his rage to trembling agitation. He had come to kill. But how can a man murder a sick boy in his bed?

He addressed Molly shortly.

"Ye must get him out of this," said he; "the house is on fire." He opened the door and called to four men by name. Curling wreaths of smoke came through the doorway.

"Take young Sheehan outside," said Donovan to the men who entered.

"And, father, father, what of John Sheehan? He's upstairs, hurt. He was hit in the leg."

"Let him burn, thin," said Donovan. "He fired me barn."

"He did not so. He was here by his son's bed till I came here. He says 'twas the hay being wet and all. 'Tis common enough."

Donovan started. Of course it was. Every farmer knows that. But in his hatred of Sheehan he had never thought of the fire except as lit by Sheehan's hand.

They carried James out into the road. Donovan went to the foot of the stairs.

"Come out of that, John Sheehan," he called loudly, "the house is on fire."

"I will not," called Sheehan from a room above. "And I have a gun. If any wan of ye comes near me, that man will I shoot like a dog."

Donovan strode resolutely up the staircase. The lower steps were already aflame, but he did not care. Hands reached to hold him back; he shook them off,

"If 'tis you, Mike Donovan," said the voice of Sheehan, "I'll down ye on the landing." And as Michael passed the top step a bullet hit the wall above his head. He rushed madly into the room. Sheehan lay on the floor in a little pool of blood. He was trying frantically to re-load his rifle. Donovan snatched the gun from his hands and flung it into a corner. He seized Sheehan by the middle, lifted him, swung him across his shoulders, and raced down the blazing stairs,

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the stair-boards crumbling into embers behind him as his weight bore them in.

Outside in the roadway John Sheehan glared at him fiercely, cursed him savagely, and then suddenly—laughed.

"Ye may be a fool, Mike Donovan. By God, ye're a brave man. And I thank ye for—for bringin' me out."

Silently the two shook hands.

"Let your girl marry my boy," said Sheehan, "and let there be friendship between us. 'Tis fools we are to be fightin' about the day of the wake. 'Tis nonsense. My leg is but a scratch. Will ye come in me boat wid me, Michael, to the mainland? We two could find out what day ut is and have paice on Cronin's."

"I will that," said Donovan.

And two days later the pair were sailing over the sea to Cullabeg.

"That field, Michael," said Sheehan suddenly, "I will give ut to my James and yeer daughter, Molly, as a wedding gift."

"The money I took from ye will rebuild the house over ye," said Michael.

"And I will laive it in me will to the pair of thim."

"'Tis a foine man ye are," said Michael Donovan.

But when Sheehan's boat on its return journey was still a long way from the shore, they looked and saw almost every soul in Cronin's on the beach.

"They want to know what day it is," laughed Sheehan, and dug Michael playfully in the ribs.

From afar off the crowd shouted.

"What day is ut?" they asked.

"'Tis Thursday, is ut not?" said a Sunday-man.

"'Tis Friday, is ut not?" asked a Monday-man.

Donovan and Sheehan laughed loud and long together.

"'Tis Wednesday," said Sheehan.

And the crowd stared, astonished.

"Oh, the divil!" said the Reverend Father Thomas McDermott. He had that morning noticed that there were several pages missing from his breviary.

HEREDITY.

Turnnig an old press through to-day,
I found 'mid many an antique treasure
Grandmamma's sampler stowed away,
Chaste product of her hours of leisure;
Wrought, as the "worked" initials state,
By P. T. J. (this last for Jackson)
In days—observe the broidered date—
When art was plush and fruit was waxen.

Lo, what a peaceful scene it shows—
Mary, a cottage door and Mary s
Doves (which the colour Grandma chose
Makes look extremely like canaries),
While underneath it all there's room
For couplets done in no iner. hues,
But noisy tints designed to boom
The merits of the major virtues.

I thought of all the moments full
Of loving care and playtime labours
That made this masterpiece in wool
And woke the wonder of the neighbours,
Till, musing on these bygone "pains,"
There came a sudden revelation
Of whence it is my daughter gains
Her skill at jumper fabrication.

Theta.

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